Awake, ye sleeping creatures of the night! It's *Morning in America*, and Vampirella is rising in the East!

Of course, the resurrection of a popular vampire is nothing unusual. (After all, that's what they do best, isn't it?) But until her rebirth, Vampirella had been dead for nearly *ten years*, man—which, in the comic book business, is roughly equivalent to a geological epoch!

But here's the deepest cut of all: She died after surviving (gasp!) *the seventies*!

That's right. While Spider-Man tooled around Manhattan in his fully-licensed, figure-not-included, some assembly-required Spider-Mobile (remember that particular travesty?); while our TV government spent six million dollars so that Col. Steve Austin could tangle with Bigfoot...and some monumentally bad leisure suits; while the Village People gyrated their way to the top of the charts; while the Stones sucked, and your older sister did "The Bump" with some cheesy Travolta wanna-be in gold-toned neck-jewelry and black polyester dress pants—*Vampirella*, along with the rest of Jim Warren's gone-but-not-forgotten horror line, somehow managed to stay...*cool*.

Or, think of it this way: While you were chuckling at *Cracked*, snarfing down cola-flavored Slurpees (in the Marvel cups, natch), watching *Superfriends* ("Wonder Twin powers, kill me...please!"), and listening to a scratchy 45 of "Yellow Submarine" for the 10,000th time, your older brother was stealing *Playboy* out of the old man's sock drawer, sneaking into *Saturday Night Fever*, and—naturally—reading *Vampirella*.

But then came the early eighties (which, if you don't remember, were really only "The Seventies Continued"). Your older brother got older, got married, and stopped kicking your butt.

The sun rose, and Vampi's final issue—dated February, 1983—disappeared from the stands like so much Transylvanian vapor. End of story...almost.

Now, fast-forward. It's 1992, and, thanks to guys like Clive Barker, Neil Gaiman, and Monks & Lisner, horror comics are cool again. (Can you hear the slow creak of a coffin lid? We thought you could!)

In the end, it was Harris Comics—in conjunction with Dark Horse—who finally removed the stake from Vampi's heroic heart, reviving her in the four-issue, Bookshelf Format mini-series you now hold open before you.

Enjoy it, but remember this: Your kid brother deserves better than you got, so let him read *Vampirella* between "wedgies," okay?

But enough with the nostalgia, already! The seventies are over! Polyester is dead! Vampi's alive!

The mourning has ended; let the morning begin!

The *Previews* Staff

VAMPIRELLA: MORNING IN AMERICA

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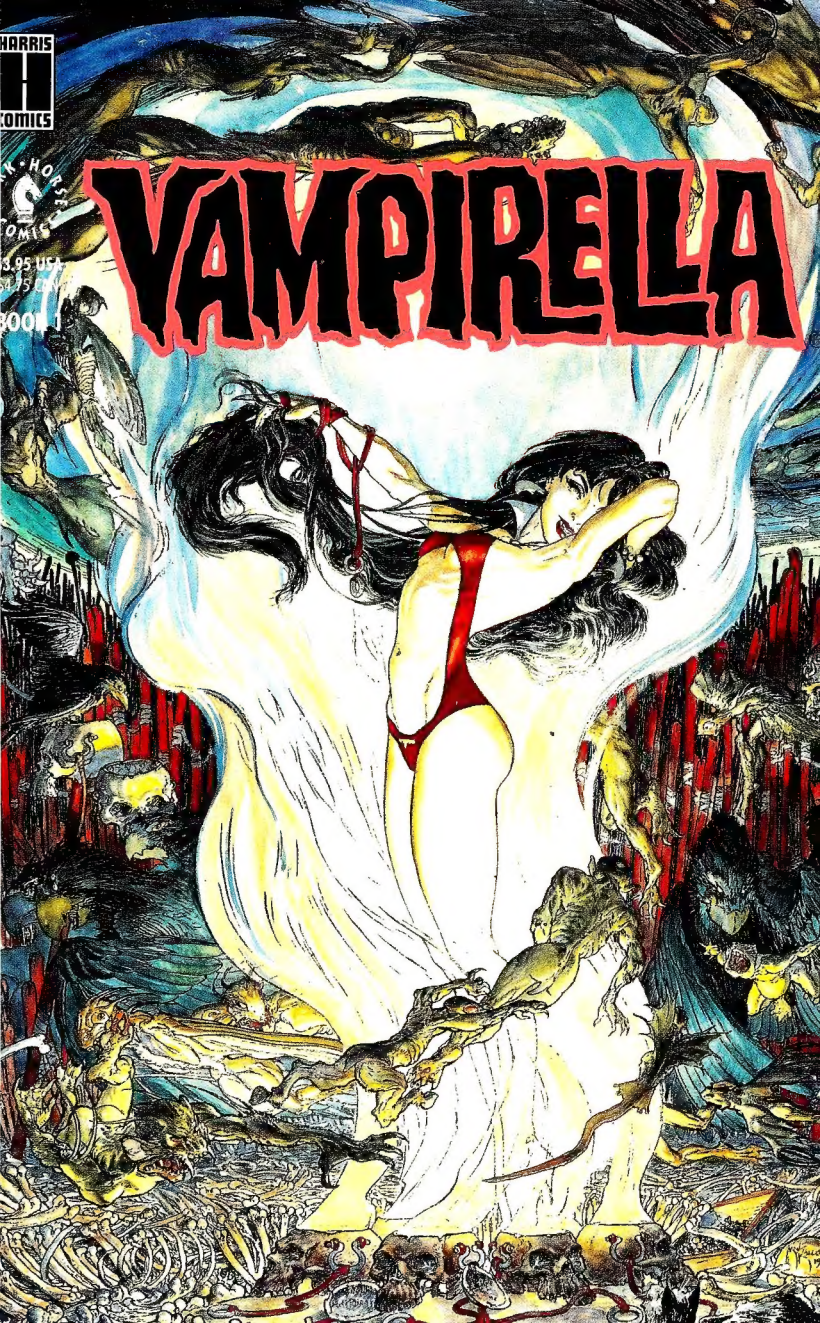
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First Printing.

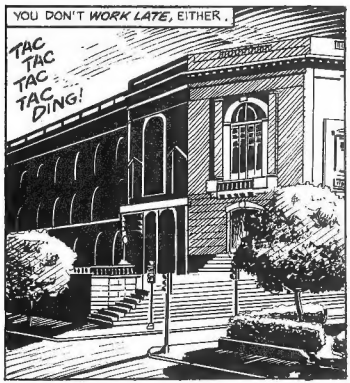
VAMPIRELLA
LUTA BLVD.
NIGHT COMES TO WASHINGTON, D.C.
NIGHT COMES . . .
CHAPTER ONE:
THE LION AND THE LIZARD

. . . AND THE PEOPLE OF WASHINGTON BEGIN TO *GO INSIDE*.
THEY *KNOW BETTER* THAN TO STAY OUT.
PAULIE!
PAUL-IE!
PAULIE! I'M *CALLIN'* YOU, BOY!

DON'T YOU BE *PLAYIN'* WITH ME, PAULIE! YOU GET *BACK* HERE!
HAVE YOU SEEN ME

IT HASN'T *ALWAYS* BEEN LIKE THIS.
I'M GONNA GO--
NO. IT'S TIME TO GO *IN.*

BUT THE PEOPLE OF WASHINGTON *KNOW...*
BUT--
I KNOW. BUT IT'S *TIME* TO *GO IN.*
... YOU DON'T STAY OUTSIDE AT NIGHT-- FOR *ANY* REASON.


YOU DON'T *WORK LATE,* EITHER.
TAC TAC TAC TAC DING!

SOME PEOPLE PUSH IT, OF COURSE. SOME PEOPLE *ALWAYS* PUSH IT.

I'VE FINISHED WITH TODAY'S *CORRESPONDENCE,* SENATOR. IF YOU DON'T NEED ME ANY MORE, I'LL HEAD *HOME.*
THAT'LL BE *FINE!* THANKS, VALERIE.
WHAT ARE YOU *WORKING* ON THERE?

TOMORROW'S CORRESPONDENCE. A HUNDRED MORE LETTERS, AND EVERYONE NEEDS SOMETHING *NOW.*
YOU KNOW HOW IT IS.

WELL, DON'T STAY TOO MUCH LONGER. IT'S GETTING *DARK*, YOU KNOW.
I WON'T. HAVE A GOOD NIGHT.
IT'S GETTING WORSE *BACK HOME*, TOO. SO MANY OF THE LETTERS ARE REQUESTS FOR HELP IN *MISSING-PERSONS* CASES.
AND THEY CALL IT A *CRIME* PROBLEM. *CRIME!*
DON'T THEY THINK WE *KNOW?*
TEN YEARS.
TEN *YEARS*.
TEN YEARS OF *PLANNING*, OF *MAKING CONTACTS*, OF *RESEARCH*.
AND FOR *WHAT?*
ARE *EITHER* OF YOU STILL ALIVE?

I'D EVEN BE HAPPY TO SEE THAT OLD FOOL PENDRAGON AGAIN.
ADAM VAN HELSING LOOKS AT THE CAPITOL BUILDING, AND THE SHADOWS SEEM TO LOOK BACK AT HIM, MOCKING HIM.
THEY DON'T WANT ANY PART OF HIM OR HIS DAYTIME KIND. AT NIGHT THEY SEEM TO SAY, THIS ISN'T YOURS ANY MORE. IT'S OURS.
GARLIC IN THE WINDOW-CATCHES. THE DOORFRAMES CROSSED WITH ASH AND ROWAN.
YOU WON'T FIND IT IN GOOD HOUSEKEEPING, BUT MOST OF WASHINGTON KNOWS.
MOST OF AMERICA, PERHAPS? ONE WOULD THINK SO, BUT PEOPLE DON'T TRAVEL SO MUCH THESE DAYS.
SOME THINGS ARE ETERNALLY TRUE, HOWEVER.
HA HA HA
THE YOUNG DON'T LISTEN.
YOU'RE DEAD NOW, JENNIE--I'M GONNA CLOCK YOU SO FAR--
OH, CHELSEA --YOU WOULDN'T--
DO IT! DO IT!

YOUNG LADIES.
IT'S GRATIFYING HOW SWIFTLY ALL MOTION STOPS.
YOU KNOW THE RULES.
YES, MISS NORMANDY.
YES, MISS NORMANDY.
YOU ARE SENIORS AND ARE EXPECTED TO SET A GOOD EXAMPLE FOR THE YOUNGER STUDENTS.
AUSTEN'S WILL NOT TOLERATE REPEATED INFRACTIONS. I TRUST I DO NOT HAVE TO EXPLAIN OUR POLICIES FURTHER.
SHE'S NO SAINT HERSELF. SHE GOES OUT.
SHE DOESN'T!
SHE DOES, AT NIGHT.
I'VE SEEN HER.
YOU HAVEN'T!
I HAVE! I SNEAKED DOWN SHE GOES OUT, NEARLY EVERY NIGHT, TOO.
Oh, CHELSEA-- YOU'RE SO WICKED!

FULL DARK NOW.
WASHINGTON HAS MADE ITS TRANSFORMATION.
ASK A WASHINGTONIAN ABOUT THE NIGHTTIME CITY AND YOU WILL NOT GET AN HONEST ANSWER.
SOME WILL REFUSE TO SPEAK TO YOU. SOME WILL CURSE YOU.
SOME WILL LIE TO YOU--AND PERHAPS TO THEMSELVES AS WELL --AND TELL YOU THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE.
BUT NOT ALL WASHINGTONIANS FEAR THE NIGHTTIME CITY.
SOME OF THEM . . .
. . . REVEL IN IT.
THE SENATE CHAMBER SEEMS EMPTY AT FIRST GLANCE. THE FEW SEATED FORMS A MINOR BLASPHEMY, AS IF VAGRANTS HAD STUMBLED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE HEART OF THE NATION AND FALLEN ASLEEP.
BUT SOUND DOES NOT ECHO IN THE VAULTED ROOM, AND THE AIR DOES NOT HAVE THE CLEAN TANG OF OPEN SPACE.

NO. THE SENATE CHAMBER IS FAR FROM EMPTY.
ESTRELLITA DIED IN 1902, A LIBRARIAN HANGED FOR MURDERING FIVE YOUNG CHILDREN. STILL DRAWN TO CHILDREN, SHE EATS THEIR BREATH.
SHE IS ONE OF THE SOUTH-WEST DELEGATION.
THE KRAICH'S FAVORITE FORM IS A KILLING SWARM. IT FAVORS SWAMPS AND MARSHES AND FEEDS ON ANYTHING WITH WARM BLOOD.
IT COMES FROM THE NORTHEAST.
SHACHAN DHUE CAME OVER ON THE MAYFLOWER. HE ESCHEWS FLESH COMPLETELY, NEEDING ONLY HEAT-- THE LIFE-HEAT OF LIVING THINGS -- TO SURVIVE.
HE MAKES HIS HOME -- WHEN HE HE HAS ONE -- IN ALASKA.
AND MORE, SEVENTY-SEVEN IN ALL -- A LARGE TURNOUT.
SIR...
ANY SIGN?
NONE, SIR.
VERY WELL.
RAP RAP RAP
BY MY DECLARATION, THE UNSEELIE CONGRESS IS NOW IN SESSION.
OUR FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS IS AN ANNOUNCEMENT.
CREATURES OF THE DARK -- SHE IS DEAD!

NONE OF THEM ASK HE NOTES, WHO "SHE" IS. NONE OF THEM NEED TO.
THERE'S ONLY ONE POSSIBILITY: VAMPIRELLA--THE OPPONENT, THE ENEMY.
SHE CAME FROM NOWHERE --FELL INTO THEIR LAPS, A SUCCULENT MORSEL TO FEED THE APPETITES OF THE GREAT GOD CHAOS.
AND SHE DESTROYED THEM.
THEY PURSUED HER, CAPTURED HER, BOUND HER TO EVIL, AND OFFERED HER SOUL TO CHAOS...
...AND SHE DESTROYED THEM AGAIN.
IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE, LOOKING BACK OVER THE YEARS, THAT ONE CREATURE, AND NOT EVEN A TRUE VAMPIRE AT THAT, COULD WREAK SUCH HAVOC AND SEEM SO UNSTOPPABLE.
AND YET, HE KNOWS, IT'S EQUALLY HARD TO BELIEVE, EVEN HAVING DONE IT...
...THAT THEY EVER DEFEATED HER.
BUT THEY DID. AND THE REST WAS EASY.

AMERICA UNDERWENT A SEA-CHANGE.
SHE WANTED THINGS: NICE CLOTHES, FAST CARS, A QUICK HIGH.
TIME TO PLAY, AND THE TOYS TO PLAY WITH
AND SHE DIDN'T CARE WHAT IT COST, SO LONG AS IT DIDN'T HAVE TO BE PAID FOR UNTIL LATER.
AMERICA WANTED IT EASY, AND SHE WANTED IT NOW.
AND THE CREATURES OF THE DARK LAUGHED, BECAUSE THEY WANTED THINGS TOO.
AND BARGAINS COULD BE MADE.
AND IT WAS GOOD.
AND THIS TIME, THE CREATURES SWORE, THEY WOULD NOT BE DEFEATED.
THEY LEARNED TO WORK TOGETHER, AND LEARNED TO MAKE THE HUMAN POWER STRUCTURE AN EXTENSION OF THEIR OWN.
THEY SET TRAPS FOR THE OPPONENT, A WATCH TO WARN THEM IF SHE RETURNED.
BUT SHE DIDN'T RETURN. AND NOW SHE IS SURELY DEAD.
AND VICTORY IS IN SIGHT. BUT -- WHAT IS VICTORY? WHAT WILL IT BRING?
THE THOUGHT BREAKS HIS REVERIE, AND HE RETURNS TO THE HERE-AND-NOW OF THE COUNCIL CHAMBER.
ZEDEDIAH HAWKINS IS EXPLAINING THE NEED FOR POPULATION GROWTH IN THE DESERT STATES, WHILE AGARUS SPEAKS FOR THE EXILES, ARGUING FOR MORE EMPHASIS ON A EUROPEAN POLICY.
AND MARY MARGARET--

--MARY MARGARET IS *HUNGRY*. GHOULS ARE *ALWAYS* SO HUNGRY.
ENOUGH!
RAPP!
YOUR POINTS ARE *NOTED*, AGARLS, I AGREE--THE DRACULA QUESTION HAS NOT BEEN ADDRESSED IN *TOO LONG*. WE WILL GET TO IT.
FOR NOW.... *TOOMEY!*
YES, SIR. I HAVE THEM RIGHT *HERE*, SIR.
SOME NIGHTS ARE *DRY*-- ONLY ONE OR TWO. OTHERS, PARTICULARLY WHEN SCHOOL TOURS COME THROUGH, ARE *RICH* AND *SATISFYING*, THOUGH THAT DOESN'T HAPPEN MUCH ANY MORE.
TONIGHT IS A *GOOD NIGHT*.
GENTLEMEN, LADIES--
--WE STAND *ADJOURNED*.
RAPP!

END CHAPTER ONE

SHE WAS *STRONG*. HE FINDS HIMSELF REMEMBERING-- AND *FIERCE*.
HE RECALLS THE *LAST* TIME HE SAW HER-- *TEN YEARS AGO*.
THEY WERE IN *COMBAT*--AS *USUAL*--WITH THE FORCES OF *CHAOS*. THEY FOUGHT *HARD*, *ALL* OF THEM . . .
BUT *SHE* WAS THE SPUR. IS IT ANY WONDER THAT THEIR ENEMIES CONCENTRATED ON NEUTRALIZING *VAMPIRELLA*.
THEY DIDN'T TARGET *ADAM VAN HELSING*.
THE CENTRAL FACT IS *THIS*: HE DOESN'T MATTER TO THEM. HE NEVER *DID*.
IN HERE.
IT'S... *BAD*.

CHAPTER TWO
UNBORN TOMORROW & DEAD YESTERDAY
HE TELLS THEM HE RETURNED FROM A *FLOOR VOTE* IN THE SENATE TO FIND HER.
HE TELLS THEM THAT THE REST OF HIS STAFF IS AT *LUNCH* OR OUT OF THE OFFICE DOING *RESEARCH* AND SHE WAS COVERING THE PHONES.
HE TELLS THEM THAT SHE WAS *ALIVE* WHEN HE FOUND HER.
HE DOES *NOT* TELL THEM WHAT SHE *SAID* BEFORE SHE DIED.

CHELSEA? YOU'VE GOT A VISITOR.
A VISITOR, MRS. McARDLE? ME?
YOUR UNCLE, SAID HE WAS.
HE'S IN THE DOWNSTAIRS PARLOR.
BUT-- I HAVEN'T GOT ANY UNCLES.
NOT AROUND HERE, ANYWAY...
WELL NOW, HE DIDN'T SAY WHERE HE WAS FROM--JUST THAT HE'S YOUR UNCLE.
IF HE'S NOT, WE'LL KNOW SOON ENOUGH.
Ah, CHELSEA! MY, YOU'VE CERTAINLY BECOME A LOVELY YOUNG WOMAN!
WHAT, NO HELLO FOR YOUR UNCLE ETHAN?

VALERIE IS PRONOUNCED D.O.A. AT CAPITOL HILL HOSPITAL.
HE HAS BROUGHT HER RECORDS FROM THE OFFICE AND ANSWERS THE QUESTIONS HE CAN.
HE DOES NOT TELL THEM WHAT SHE SAID.
HE REMEMBERS CLEARLY THE LAST TIME HE FELT LIKE THIS.

IT WAS TEN YEARS AGO.
THE CULT OF CHAOS HAD SURFACED AGAIN, THIS TIME ON WALL STREET, AND WE WERE IN NEW YORK TO STOP IT.
CHAINS... CHAINS...

WHAT IS IT, FATHER? ONE OF YOUR VISIONS?
IT'S... IT'S PASSING, ADAM. I'M ALL RIGHT.

IT WAS AN OVERWHELMING SENSATION OF MENACE, ALONG WITH A FLASH OF HEAVY IRON CHAINS.
IT WAS-- IT FELT LIKE A WARNING --AS IF TONIGHT'S MISSION MAY END IN DIS-ASTER!
D-DISASTER?

WE SHOULDN'T HAVE GONE.
THAT'S JUST WHAT CHAOS WANTS US TO THINK!
IF WE COULD BE SCARED OFF, DON'T THEY THINK IT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED LONG AGO?
BUT WE DID, OF COURSE.

BUT-- BUT I DON'T HAVE AN--

Uh...
YES... OF COURSE. HELLO, UNCLE ETHAN. IT'S BEEN YEARS!
HE TELLS THEM HOW LONG SHE WORKED FOR HIM, TELLS THEM ABOUT THE OTHERS IN THE OFFICE.
HE TELLS THEM EVERYTHING HE WOULD HAVE KNOWN IF HE DIDN'T KNOW WHY SHE DIED.
HE TELLS THEM SHE DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING.
THE TRADE PAPERS HAD BEEN CALLING THEM 'DEMON BROKERS' DUE TO THEIR SUCCESS, AND THEY DIDN'T KNOW HOW RIGHT THEY WERE.
WE TRACKED THEM DOWN TO THE SUBWAYS. THEY HAD A REGULAR CLUBHOUSE UNDER THE CITY.
VAMPIRELLA, PENDRAGON, DAD, AND I SURPRISED THEM. THERE WERE HUMANS DOWN THERE -- ALONG WITH THE DEMONS THEY DEALT WITH.
WE TORE INTO THEM WITH ABANDON, FLUSHED WITH THE CONFIDENCE THAT COMES WITH YEARS OF SUCCESS...
BUT NO-BODY WINS FOREVER.
N-NO---!

IT WAS ETHAN SHROUD.
TIME TO CHOOSE, I THINK.
WILL VAMPIRELLA SURRENDER--OR WILL THE OLD MAN DIE?
I DON'T KNOW HOW MANY TIMES HE'S BEEN BROUGHT BACK FROM THE DEAD--
--BUT HE MUST BE USED TO IT.
I WAS PARALYZED WITH FEAR--BUT VAMPIRELLA HAD A PLAN...
I CHOOSE NEITHER, SHROUD! I THINK YOU'LL KEEP CONRAD ALIVE--
--OR THERE'LL BE NOTHING TO PREVENT ME FROM TEARING YOUR THROAT OUT!
AND DON'T CALL HIM OLD--HE'S FAR YOUNGER THAN YOU.
AT LEAST, I THOUGHT SHE DID...
I'M BLEEDING, CHELSEA.
COME HERE.

SO SWEET. .
HE TELLS THEM THERE'LL BE A FULL INVESTIGATION.
HE TELLS THEM TO CALL LILLIAN IN HIS OFFICE TOMORROW MORNING FOR A STATEMENT
HE DOESN'T TELL THEM ANYTHING ELSE.
SHE LEFT ME THEN...
--DON'T YOU SEE? IT'S ME HE'S AFTER. IF YOU'RE WITH ME, HE'LL ONLY GO AFTER YOU TO GET AT ME
DON'T TRY TO FOLLOW ME.
I'LL GET YOUR FATHER BACK, ADAM-- I PROMISE.
I PLEADED WITH HER, BUT IT WAS USELESS.
SHE'D MADE HER MIND UP--AND WORSE, SHE WAS RIGHT.
WITHOUT MY FATHER AND HER, THE CULT WOULDN'T WASTE A MOMENT'S THOUGHT ON US.

I NEVER SAW *EITHER OF THEM* AGAIN.
COLD... SO *COLD*...
OHMI-*GAWD!*
OHMIGAWD, CHELSEA--YOU WERE *RIGHT!*
LOOK, LOOK--IT'S *HER!* SHE'S GOING *OUT!*

OH, CHELSEA--MAYBE YOU WERE RIGHT!
MAYBE SHE DOES SELL GIRLS TO THE--TO THE DARKNESS!
NO!
NO--I NEVER SAID THAT. I DIDN'T!
I COULDN'T...
CHELSEA?
CHELSEA, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
OTVEN
BOIZ

THIS ONE--HER SKIN WAS SO *SOFT*, LIKE *CHINESE SILK*.
AND THIS--THE BLUE IN HER *EYES* OUTSHONE A *MAY SKY*.

THE *YOUNG* ARE BEST. THEIR SOULS ARE *SWEET*--THEIR FEAR *NEW* AND *BRIGHT*.
IT'S ALMOST A PITY THEY END UP *DEAD*--BUT THEN, I HARDLY EXPECT THEY'D WANT TO *LIVE*...
CONSIDERING...

STILL, IT HAS BEEN RATHER... *EASY*...OF LATE.
THERE'S A CERTAIN FLAVOR--A CERTAIN *SPICE*--TO SPIRITED RESISTANCE--
--AND I MUST ADMIT, IT'S BEEN *MISSING* IN RECENT YEARS.

PERHAPS CHELSEA IS THE RIGHT ONE PERHAPS ALL IT WOULD TAKE IS A FEW... MODIFICATIONS... TO CREATE IN HER THE CHALLENGE I LONG FOR.
OR PERHAPS I'M PLAYING WITH FIRE AND SHOULD BE CONTENT WITH ALL I'VE GOT-- WHICH IS, WHEN ONE ASSESSES IT, CONSIDERABLE.
WHAT SAY YOU,--
--MY DEAR PROFESSOR VAN HELSING?
HE NO LONGER NEEDS TO SAY ANYTHING-- AND BARELY NEEDS TO LISTEN...
THE STREET NAME OF THE DRUG IS BLOOD. IT'S A DARK-RED POWDER, ALMOST BLACK. IT'S SAID TO GIVE THE KIND OF HIGH A VAMPIRE FEELS WHEN DRAINING A LIVING VICTIM.
MAY I REMIND DISTINGUISHED COLLEAGUE THAT EVEN IF THE REST THE COUNTRY HAS GONE SUPERSTITION-HAPPY, THIS IS STILL THE U.S. SENATE?
AND MAY I REMIND MY COLLEAGE THAT WE ARE NOT DISCUSSING HALLOWEEN MONSTERS--
--BUT THE ESCALATING DRUG PROBLEM.
I THREW MYSELF INTO MY STUDIES, THREW MYSELF INTO WORK, WAITING FOR HER TO RETURN.
I WAS ACTIVE IN THE COMMUNITY-- ACTIVE IN STATE POLITICS.
I THOUGHT IT MIGHT PAY OFF --MIGHT GIVE ME A POSITION FROM WHICH I COULD CHALLENGE SHROUD AND THE CULT OF CHAOS.
IT PAID OFF-- IT PAID OFF HANDSOMELY.
VOTE
VOTE
THEY SENT ME TO THE STATE HOUSE, AND THEN TO WASHINGTON.
BUT SOMETHING WAS MISSING.
I FELT LIKE THE LOYAL DEMOCRAT IN THE STORY THEY TELL IN THE BARS AROUND HERE--
--HE WAKES UP EVERY MORNING AND THINKS: "I'M READY! I'M READY! JUST TELL ME WHO TO FOLLOW!"
AND NO ONE ANSWERS HIM

CHELSEA? PACKAGE FOR YOU.
FROM UNCLE ETHAN
THE OTHER CENTRAL FACT IS THIS: SINCE HE DIDN'T MATTER TO THEM, THEY LEFT HIM ALONE.
BUT NOW HE HAS A MESSAGE--A BRUTAL MESSAGE THAT TELLS HIM SEVERAL THINGS.
IT REMINDS HIM THAT HE STILL DOESN'T MATTER. IT CONFIRMS THAT NONETHELESS, THEY'VE WATCHED HIM--THEY KNOW WHERE HE IS AND WHAT HE'S DOING. AND IT GIVES HIM THE RESOLUTION HE'S DREADED.
SIXTEEN WORDS, COUGHED OUT BY VALERIE AS SHE DIED: "THEY SAID THEY DIDN'T NEED YOUR FATHER ANY MORE. THEY SAID YOU'D HAVE HIM BACK SOON."
HE REPLAYS THE MESSAGE IN HIS MIND, AGAIN AND AGAIN, AND HE WISHES DESPERATELY THAT SOMEONE WOULD TELL HIM WHAT TO DO.
END CHAPTER TWO

GEORGETOWN. 11:49 A.M.
THE DRUG IS CALLED BLOOD. IT HAS BEEN CONSIDERED AN EXOTIC, A FRINGE DRUG, FOR MOST OF ITS EXISTENCE--
--BUT IT HAS BEEN GAINING IN POPULARITY RECENTLY.
SHE DOES NOT KNOW HOW LONG SHE HAS BEEN TAKING THE DRUG.
SHE DOES NOT REMEMBER A TIME SHE DIDN'T TAKE IT.
ALL SHE CAN THINK ABOUT, AS THE SMELL OF IT FILLS THE AIR, IS THE RICH, ACRID TASTE OF IT--
--AND THE WAY IT DULLS THE PAIN INSIDE HER.
IT WORKS SWIFTLY. HER MIND RELAXES AS THE GRAY BANDS THAT STRANGLE IT LOOSEN AND FADE INTO BACKGROUND NOISE.
BLOOD PULSES LESS SLUGGISHLY THROUGH HER VEINS, BRINGING A TINGE OF ROSE TO HER PALLID SKIN.
A VEIL FALLS FROM HER SENSES--
--AND TOUCH, TASTE, HEARING BECOME MORE VIVID, MORE IMMEDIATE.
THINK TICK

CHAPTER THREE
MORNING IN THE BOWL OF NIGHT
IT FITS VERY SNUGLY, AND THE MAN WHO SENT IT TO HER IS NOT HER UNCLE.
SHE TRIES TO REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED WHEN HE VISITED HER, BUT IT'S NOT CLEAR IN HER MIND--NOT CLEAR AT ALL.
THERE WAS PLEASURE, AND THERE WAS SOMETHING THAT SCARED HER SHE HAS A FIERCE, EMPHATIC NEED TO SEE HIM AGAIN, AND AT THE SAME TIME, SHE HOPES SHE NEVER WILL.
SHE SHOULD TAKE IT OFF. IT MAKES HER LOOK LIKE A TRAMP.
STILL...

YOUNG LADIES SHOULD BE CAREFUL WHAT THEY WEAR--
--SO MUCH IN THIS WORLD DEPENDS ON FIRST IMPRESSIONS.
OH, GOD! MISS NORMANDY--!
I'M SORRY, MISS NORMANDY, I--
I KNOW YOU, CHELSEA CANTRELL. I KNOW YOUR KIND.
YOU HURT-- YOU TEASE--
YOU SMILE SMILES THAT AREN'T SUITABLE--
WEAR CLOTHES THAT DON'T BELONG TO YOU--
YOU EAT, DRINK, LAUGH-- THE YOUNG MEN LIKE YOU--
YOU-- YOU--
OH, GOD--
...IT DOESN'T BELONG TO YOU...
OH GOD OH GOD OH GOD--

KALORAMA CIRCLE, 2:03 P.M.
AND TO THINK--YOU ACTUALLY BELIEVED YOU WERE FROM OUTER SPACE...!
HE THINKS BACK TO THE FIRST TIME HE SAW HER.
HE REMEMBERS HOW SHE CAUSED HIS DEATH.
HE CONSIDERS WHETHER HE SHOULD DO AS HE PLANS.
HE DECIDES TO PROCEED, AND DAMN THE CONSEQUENCES.

GEORGETOWN, 2:09 P.M.
I MEAN, DID YOU SEE HER?

SHE ALMOST KNOCKED ME DOWN. IT'S LIKE SHE DIDN'T EVEN SEE ME.
IT'S DRUGS! OLD NORMANDY'S FINALLY BECOME A FULL-BLOWN JUNKIE.

HA HA HA HA HA HA
NO--!
OLD NORMANDY--ON DRUGS! I LOVE IT!

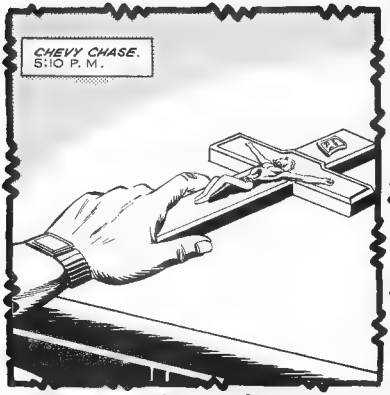
DON'T-- DON'T *SAY* THAT!
HUH?
SHE MIGHT... *HEAR* YOU.
CHELSEA, WHAT IS *WITH* YOU THESE DAYS?
KALORAMA CIRCLE. 2:15 P.M.
IT IS A *SANGUI-VIRE.*
MAN FIRST DISCOVERED IT-- AND ITS *APPETITES*-- IN EGYPT, IN THE TIME OF THE PHARAOHS.
BUT IT IS *FAR OLDER* THAN MAN.
THAT'S VERY *OLD,* SIR.
VERY *VALUABLE.*
ARE YOU *CRITICIZING* ME, TOOMEY?
ARE YOU INTIMATING, PERHAPS, THAT IT'S *UNWISE* TO CREATE A VAMPIRE WHO *DOESN'T* HEED THE *SIREN CALL OF CHAOS?*
ARE YOU TELLING ME THAT *UNFORGIVING NUBERUS* --OR EVEN *DREAD CHAOS* HIM-SELF-- MAY BE *ANGRY* WITH ME IF I CREATE A *NEW* VAMPIRELLA?
HOW *DARING* OF YOU.

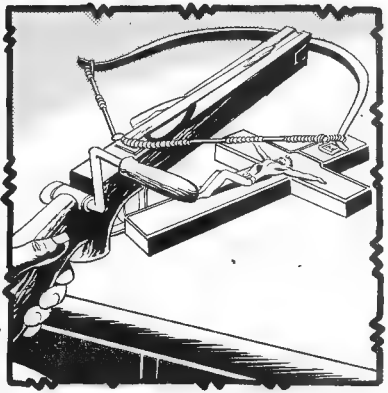
CHEVY CHASE 4:52 P.M.
HIS FATHER'S BODY IS PACKED IN CHARID, AN HERB THAT PREVENTS SPOILAGE. HE RECOGNIZES IT FROM HIS FATHER'S TEACHINGS.
THE BODY CAME UPS. THE RETURN ADDRESS IS DELIBERATELY SMEARED, AND HE KNOWS THAT IF HE CONTACTS UPS, HE'LL GET A FALSE TRAIL.
IT DOESN'T MATTER. HE KNOWS WHO SENT IT.
HE MUST DO SOMETHING TO AVENGE TO FATHER. HE MUST.

GEORGETOWN. 4:56 P.M.
Ohhh..
IT HAS WORN OFF.

THE GRAY BANDS TIGHTEN AROUND HER MIND. HER BLOOD FORCES ITSELF PAINFULLY ALONG, OOZING THROUGH CHOKED VEINS. THE VEIL IS LIFTED.
BUT SHE HAS MORE, ENOUGH FOR SEVERAL DAYS, IF SHE IS CAREFUL.

THIS IS NOT HER ROOM.


CHEVY CHASE.
5:10 P. M.



YOUR HONOR? SORRY TO BOTHER YOU, SIR. I'M GOING TONIGHT!
READY OR NOT, SIR, I'M GOING. I NEED TO KNOW THE LATEST.

GEORGETOWN.
1:46 A.M.
OKAY --IT'S TIME.
TOOMEY LIKES NIGHTS LIKE THIS: HE'S IN CHARGE. THEY HAVE TO SHOW HIM RESPECT.
IT DOESN'T MATTER THAT WHAT THEY'RE DOING COULD BRING RUIN AND DAMNATION ON THEM ALL.
TOOMEY'S IN CHARGE AND HE LIKES IT.
GARLIC IN THE WINDOW-CATCH.
IT'LL PREVENT MOST NIGHT-CREATURES FROM ENTERING A HOME WITHOUT AN INVITATION.
IT WON'T STOP HUMANS.

MMMF! MMFFM!

DON'T MUMBLE, CHELSEA--

--IT'S UN-BECOMING IN THE YOUNG.

CHELSEA CANTRELL ONLY HAS TIME TO THINK OH GOD OH GOD I WAS RIGHT BEFORE--
KILL HEK.

AAAAAH!
IT SEEMS TO HAPPEN IN SECONDS.
THEIR BLOOD IS FOULED--
--WITH NICOTINE, WITH ALCOHOL, WITH BAD FOOD.
IT STILL RIPS THROUGH HER LIKE LIGHTNING.
IT BURNS AWAY YEARS OF DAMAGE, YEARS OF ABUSE.
THE GRAY BANDS ARE GONE. HER MIND IS CLEAR.
HER BODY IS YOUNG, STRONG, POWERFUL.
HER SENSES ARE ACUTE. THE SMELL OF TERROR IS SO SHARP IT ALMOST HURTS.
IT'S WONDERFUL.

END CHAPTER THREE

IT HAS BEEN ANOTHER GOOD NIGHT.
AS ALWAYS, THE NECROMANTIC ENERGY FILLS HIM WITH DARKNESS AND HATRED AND DEATH--
--AND, AS ALWAYS, IT STIRS HIS MEMORY.

WHEN ETHAN SHROUD WAS TWENTY-SEVEN HE WAS THE LEADER OF THE WITCHES OF SALEM VILLAGE, MASSACHUSETTS.
HE NEVER ONCE EXPECTED TO FIND GREATER POWER THAN THAT.

AFTER HIS FIRST RESURRECTION, HE BECAME THE LEADER OF THE COMPANIONS OF CHAOS, A SMALL GROUP DEDICATED TO THE GLORY OF THE SEVEN SERVANTS OF CHAOS AND, ULTIMATELY, THE REBIRTH OF THE DREAD GOD HIMSELF.
HE WAS AMAZED AT THE HEIGHTS HE'D REACHED.

AFTER HIS SECOND RESURRECTION, HE BECAME THE FAVORED OF NUBERUS.
NUBERUS THE MANY-TONGUED, THE WHISPERER, NUBERUS THE KEEPER OF SOULS, FIRST SERVANT OF CHAOS.

ETHAN SHROUD HAS BECOME THE CHANNEL THROUGH WHICH THE DARK POWER OF THE EARTH IS HARVESTED FOR THE NETHER-VOID AND THE UNSPEAKABLE BEINGS WITHIN IT.
IT IS THE HIGHEST HONOR TO WHICH A HUMAN CAN ASPIRE -- IN THE EYES OF THE SEVEN SERVANTS. HIS AMBITION HAS TAKEN HIM FAR.

HE HAS BEGUN TO WONDER WHERE IT MIGHT TAKE HIM NEXT.

CHAPTER FOUR
A CHEQUER-BOARD OF NIGHTS AND DAYS
WHEN PIERRE L'ENFANT DESIGNED WASHINGTON D.C. IN 1791, HE ENVISIONED A CITY OF VISUAL HARMONIES OF GRAND AVENUES AND GREAT EDIFICES, --BUT ALSO A CITY OF THE PEOPLE, AS MUCH FOR PUBLIC USE AS OF PUBLIC POWER.
TO ETHAN SHROUD, HOWEVER, IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN A GAME BOARD OF SHIFTING POWER CENTERS -- A BOARD ON WHICH THE SQUARES CHANGE COLOR FROM WHITE DURING THE DAY TO BLACK AT NIGHT
IT HAS BEEN ANOTHER GOOD NIGHT, TRUE-- BUT THE NIGHT IS ONLY BEGINNING.
Downtown East
THE WHITE HOUSE
THE ELLIPSE
THE NATIONAL MALL
U.S. CAPITOL

THEY ARE THE UNQUIET DEAD.
THEY PLAY THEIR MELODIES OF LOSS AND DESPAIR AND HOPE FOR MEN TO COME TO FREE THEM OF THEIR PAIN.
BUT THE MEN COME, AND THE MEN DIE--AND THE PAIN GOES ON.
THEY ARE THE KINDER-GARTEN.
THEY VISIT THE CHILDREN OF WASHINGTON, WHOSE PARENTS SMILE AT TALES OF INVISIBLE FRIENDS.
AND EVERY NOW AND THEN, AT NIGHT, A CHILD OR TWO WILL VISIT THEM.
THEY ARE THE SUCCUBI.
THEY NEED NO SONGS. THEY NEED NO MEN. BUT THEY KNOW THE MEN WILL COME NONETHELESS.
THAT IS WHAT MEN DO.
THEY ARE THE O-TYPE BOYZ.
THEIR MASTERS BID THEM CORRUPT RATHER THAN SLAY--
--SO THAT IS WHAT THEY DO, BUT THEIR MASTERS ARE DONE WITH THEM FOR TONIGHT--
--AND THEY ARE THIRSTY.
THEY ARE THE LOUP-GAROU.
THEY MARK THEIR TURF. THEY PROWL THEIR TURF. THEY PROTECT THEIR TURF.
THEIR TURF IS THEIR OWN.
THEY ARE THE NIGHT CREATURES.
THEY WAIT. THEY PLAY. THEY SING. THEY HUNT. ALL OF THEM AND MORE.
THEY ARE ALL THE BLACK PIECES--
--ON THE BLACK SQUARES.

I CAN STILL FEEL HIM.
INSIDE MY HEAD.
IT WILL PASS.
WAIT! W-WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
I HAVE... THINGS TO DO. CLOSE THE WINDOW ONCE I HAVE GONE.
HE DARES NOT PARK ANY CLOSER.
A CAR NEAR THE CAPITOL AT THIS HOUR WOULD BE TOO SUSPICIOUS.
HE'LL HAVE TO APPROACH ON FOOT.

ADAM VAN HELSING KNOWS HE WILL *DIE* TONIGHT. HE ONLY HOPES HIS DEATH WILL MAKE A *DIFFERENCE*.
ETHAN SHROUD IS THE *KEY*. ETHAN SHROUD IS THE *ONLY CONNECTION* BETWEEN THE UNSEELIE CONGRESS AND THE SEVEN SERVANTS OF CHAOS.

WITHOUT ETHAN SHROUD, THE CONGRESS WOULD BE SHATTERED... HUMANITY WOULD HAVE A *FIGHTING CHANCE* AGAIN...
IF ONLY HE CAN REACH THE *CAPITOL BUILDING*...
IF ONLY HE CAN *KILL* ETHAN SHROUD...

IT'S GOING TO BE A *LONG* WALK.

THE SMELLS ARE *GOOD* HERE
THERE IS THE *BLOOD-SMELL* THAT MEANS MAN.
THERE IS THE *URINE-SMELL* THAT MEANS ME.
THERE IS THE *DEAD-SMELL* THAT MEANS THE *FANGED* ONES.

AND THERE IS...
THERE IS...

IS SOMETHING FOLLOWING ME?

AND WHAT WAS *YOUR* PART IN IT, ADAM WONPERS.
YOU WERE PART OF THE ADMINISTRATION THAT *SAW IN* THIS NEW ERA.
WAS IT *NEGLIGENCE?* WAS IT *BLINDNESS?* DID THEY GET THE WHITE HOUSE *FIRST?*
I NEVER FOUND ANYTHING TO *CONNECT* THE WHITE HOUSE AND THE UNSEELIE CONGRESS.
IS THERE NOTHING TO *FIND?* OR ARE THE BODIES BURIED TOO *DEEP?*
I REMEMBER A TIME WHEN THESE QUESTIONS WOULD BE *UNTHINKABLE.*

NOW THEY'RE ROUTINE.
THREE OF THEM ARE DEAD. THE FOURTH WILL BE SOON
WHAT DID THIS TO THEM?
HUH?
WELL? COME ON, THEN!
COME ON!

THEY ARE THE LOWEST FORM OF DEMON LIFE, BUT THEY HAVE NO ENEMIES, NATURAL OR UNNATURAL.
THEY MAKE NO KILLS OF THEIR OWN--CONTENT MERELY TO FEED ON THE OFFAL THE OTHERS LEAVE BEHIND.
THE OTHER NIGHT-CREATURES LEAVE THEM ALONE. THEY DON'T INTERFERE, AFTER ALL, AND THEY PROVIDE A SERVICE.
AND THE HUMANS -- THE ONLY HUMANS WHO COME IN CONTACT WITH THEM ARE DEAD ONES.
BUT NOW THEY RUN. NOW SOMETHING HUNTS THEM.
AND THEIR BRAINS ARE SMALL, BUT STILL THEY KNOW --
-- THEY WILL NOT ESCAPE IT

SOMETHING'S...
WRONG!
THE SMELL OF DEATH -- THE FINAL DEATH -- IS EVERYWHERE. MANY HAVE FACED THE ULTIMATE GATE TONIGHT. BUT THE CACODAEMON KNOWS NO FEAR.
IT CANNOT BE DEFEATED.
IT IS NEVER THE SAME THING FOR TWO SECONDS IN A ROW. IT SHIFTS FORM TOO RAPIDLY TO BE PERCEIVED.
HOW, THEN, CAN IT BE FOUGHT?
IT CAN-NOT BE DEFEATED.
IT CANNOT.
IT CANNOT!

CRK
WHERE ARE THEY?
HE HAS WALKED THE ENTIRE LENGTH OF THE MALL -- AND HE HAS SEEN NOTHING.
WHERE ARE THEY ALL?

SIR! SIR, IT--
IT'S--
HE DOES NOT NEED TO HEAR TOOMEY'S EXPLANATION.
ONE LOOK, AND HE KNOWS.
ALL THE WEAPONS, THE GRIM DEMEANOR, --IT'S NOT YOU, ADAM.
YOU'RE JUST NOT A HUNTER.
NOW, ME--
--I'M A HUNTER!
VAM--
--PI...?

ETHAN SHROUD FEELS THE POWER OF DARKNESS *SLIPPING AWAY* FROM HIM, LEAVING HIM ONLY A *LITTLE MORE* THAN A NORMAL MAN--
--JUST AS IT DOES *EVERY* MORNING.
BUT THIS MORNING IS *DIFFERENT*. THIS MORNING, THE GAME HAS CHANGED *COMPLETELY*.
THERE IS A *NEW PLAYER* ON THE BOARD, IN WHAT WAS FAST BECOMING A *ONE-PLAYER* GAME. BUT THERE ARE *TWO* PLAYERS NOW--OR PERHAPS *THREE?*
FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YEARS, ETHAN SHROUD FINDS HIMSELF WONDERING WHAT THE *DAY* WILL BRING.
AND HE *SMILES*.

END CHAPTER FOUR—CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE

The Return Of Vampirella

Introduction to Vampirella: Morning In America, Book One

Nosferatu, Dracula, Barnabas Collins. These vampires, dignified gentlemen all, engaged in one of the most ancient and honorable occupations of their ilk: they came back—they revived.

Yes, vampires come back; it's one of the things they do so well. It should come as no surprise, then, that Vampirella has returned. For those who know and love her, Vampi's reappearance is a historic event, rivalling in significance the Protestant Reformation, the Lousiana Purchase and Joe DiMaggio's 56-game hitting streak.

After countless hours of intense soul-searching, the editors of this volume decided to incorporate our protagonist's long absence into the storyline of her revival. *Vampirella*, the series, has been gone for almost ten years. Vampirella, the character, has likewise been gone for a decade. Chaos and its allies have flourished. The Unseelie Congress holds a grim, benighted Washington, D.C., in its unwholesome grip; all presided over by Vampirella's old foe Ethan Shroud.

And that's where we pick up the story. Inside, Shroud makes a surprising move on the tenth anniversary of Vampirella's disappearance. She's been gone a decade, but she can't be *dead*, can she?

The Return of Vampirella is brought to you courtesy of some of the finest comic talents in the United States:

Kurt Busiek, known far his years of toil in Marvel's direct sales department, is also a first-rate writer. Among his credits are fine work for Marvel's *What if?*, *Power Man* and *Iron Fist*; many recent *Spider-Man* adventures; and *Red Tornado* and *Wonder Woman* for DC. He co-created (with James Fry) and wrote the highly-lauded *Liberty Project* for Eclipse, and is working on *Final Fantasy* for Disney. And he is here, doing some of his best work ever. Kurt wishes to thank Lawrence Watt-Evans, who served as his consultant on the ins and outs of Washington D.C.

Penciller Louis La Chance is a young, hot, new talent who has had work published in Marvel's *Open Space*. *Vampirella* is his first big assignment. A graduate of the Joe Kubert school, he is a unique stylist, and you're all going to hear much of him in the future. The collectibility begins right here, folks.

Our inker, John Nyberg, is well-known to all fans of *Nexus*, *Doom Patrol* and the Batman comic strip. Despite prior commitments, John was able to ink most of Vampirella issue #1. Editor Richard Howell stepped in to ink the issue's remaining sixteen pages. From #2 on, John will be steering the brushwork solo.

Editor/packager Richard Howell may be known to many of you as an artist for Marvel (*Vision and Scarlet Witch*) and DC (*Hawkman*, *All-Star Squadron*), or as the artist/writer/creator of the cult favorite Portia Prinz of the *Glamazons*. Earlier in his career Richard edited both fanzines and comics for New Media Publishing. He eventually went free-lance, and some of the material he put into production ("The Djinn," "Ric") wound up at other publishers. But he never really got over the editing urge (see Eclipse's *Real Love: The Best of the Simon and Kirby Romance Comics*, for instance).Now, with *Vampirella*, he's back into it full-steam.

Some forthcoming Harris Publication horror projects include a revival of *Creepy* (all new material), a trade paperback collection of classic stories from *Creepy* (still available at your local comics store!) with a new painted cover by Michael Kaluta, and a trade paperback collection of the seminal first seven Vampirella adventure stories by Archie Goodwin, Tom Sutton and Jose Gonzales. If you are at all intrigued by the new Vampirella material offered here in this series, you owe it to yourself to pick up the trade paperback. Not only is it loaded with great stuff, with a new cover by Jim Steranko and Paul Gulacy (!) but some of the characters and situations depicted therein have a direct bearing on Vampirella's immediate future.

Harris's *Vampirella* will be winging its way to you (on little bat wings) for four 48-page bi-monthly issues. As to the future, we're considering a monthly series that promises the same quality as these omnibus volumes—but in a less cumbersome format. Many surprises await you in these four issues, and we welcome your comments. Please send any letters to:

VAMPIRELLA
C/o Harris Publications, Inc.
1115 Broadway, 8th Floor
New York, New York 10010

Remember to be back here in November for *Vampirella: Morning in America, Book Two*. Same bat-time—nooh! Well, two months from now, anyway.

Welcome to the Harris Horror Universe.

ISSUE 113 ON SALE SEPT'81
#113
PROTEST
TAKE BACK THE NIGHT!
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BOOK 2

At the punch bowl's brink
Let the thirsty think
What they say in Japan:
"First a man takes a drink
Then the drink takes a drink
Then the drink takes the man!"

Edward Rowland Sill, An Adage From The Orient

I'm going to be in charge right up till the last minute!

Lyndon B. Johnson

Kurt Busiek
WRITER

Louis La Chance
PENCILLER

John Nyberg
INKER

Kevin Cunningham
LETTERER

Richard Howell
LETTERER & EDITOR

Jesse Reyes
CO-EDITOR & PUBLICATION DESIGN

Michael Wm. Kaluta
COVER ARTIST

JOSE GONZALES

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First Printing.

CHAPTER FIVE
MONKEY WINE
(that which) enlivens
STARRING:
VAMPIRELLA
THE GREAT PENDRAGON NEEDS A DRINK.
COME ONE, COME ALL! DON'T MISS A MOMENT OF THE GRAND AND GLORIOUS MAGIC SHOW!
SEE WONDERS UNDREAMED OF! SEE MIRACLES OCCUR BEFORE YOUR EYES!
The Great PEN GOD
EVERY TIME HE STARTS A SHOW, HE MISSES HER.
AND HE NEEDS A DRINK.

IF VAMPIRELLA WERE HERE, THEY WOULDN'T CARE THAT HE'S NOT THAT GOOD.
IF HE HAD A DRINK, HE WOULDN'T CARE EITHER.
BUT IF HE HAD A DRINK, HE'D BE EVEN WORSE, SO HE DOESN'T DRINK UNTIL AFTER THE SHOW.
IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER, THOUGH. THE AUDIENCE ISN'T PARTICULAR.
THEY'RE JUST AS HAPPY SEEING A BAD MAGICIAN AS THEY WOULD BE SEEING A GOOD ONE.
NO, IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER. VAMPIRELLA IS DEAD, THE WORLD HAS GONE TO HELL, AND THE GREAT PENDRAGON IS NOTHING BUT A PATHETIC OLD DRUNK.
I LOOKED FOR YOU, YOU KNOW.
I LOOKED FOR YOU FOR TEN YEARS.
THANK YOU FOR LOOKING. I HOPE YOU FORGIVE ME FOR LEAVING.
AT THE TOUCH OF HER HAND, ADAM VAN HELSING IS TWENTY-TWO AGAIN, AND SEEING HER FOR THE FIRST TIME.
I KNEW YOU'D BE SAFER WITHOUT ME
IF I'D STAYED, SHROUD WOULD HAVE KILLED YOU TO GET AT ME
SO WILD. SO BEAUTIFUL, SO FREE. HIS FATHER NEVER UNDERSTOOD WHAT HE FELT FOR HER, FEARED IT AS IF IT WERE AN EVIL ENCHANTMENT.
I HAD TO BE ALONE-- TO ATTACK HIM WITH-OUT RISKING ANYONE'S LIFE BUT MINE.
HE HELD YOUR FATHER HOSTAGE. I HAD TO HARRY HIM CONSTANTLY--
--MAKE SURE HE KNEW THAT IF CONRAD DIED, HE'D BE NEXT.
NOT THAT I'VE BEEN DOING MUCH OF THAT LATELY.
HIS FATHER WAS CONVINCED THAT SHE WAS DANGEROUS -- THAT SHE'D CAUSE SOME SORT OF HORRIBLE TRAGEDY FOR THEM ALL.

HE WAS WRONG ABOUT THAT, OF COURSE.
WHERE IS YOUR FATHER, ADAM?
DID HE ESCAPE? WAS HE EVER RESCUED?
Oh, ADAM I'M SO SORRY!
I PROMISED I'D FREE HIM -- AND I FAILED.
I FAILED BOTH OF YOU
WE'D BETTER GET DRESSED.
HIS FUNERAL IS THIS AFTER-NOON.

THE STORIES WORK BETTER.
"--felt the werewolf's breath, hot and fetid on the back of my neck--"
THE STORIES HAVE BEEN WORKING BETTER AND BETTER FOR YEARS

IT ALWAYS WORKS BETTER WHEN THEY BELIEVE.
AND ONCE THEY BELIEVE, THEY BUY THE TRINKETS AND CHARMS HE SELLS TO MAKE A LIVING
--DIDN'T HAVE THE SILVER AMULET OF BREDE, I DOUBT I'D BE HERE TALKING TO YOU NOW--
WHO KNOWS? MAYBE IT'S TIME TO PACK IN THE MAGIC AND JUST TELL STORIES.
CUT DOWN ON WASTED TIME.

VAMPIRELLA SEES HIM SQUARE HIS SHOULDERS AND SHE KNOWS:
HE'S GOING TO MAKE A PROMISE.
YOU WILL BE AVENGED, FATHER
YOU HAVE MY WORD ON THAT.
IF HER PROMISE HAD BEEN KEPT, HIS WOULD BE UNNECESSARY:- BUT HERS WAS SHATTERED BY A NEED TOO STRONG TO IGNORE.
BLOOD. BLOOD IS WHAT SHE NEEDS.
SHE ONCE HAD A SERUM --A SUBSTITUTE THAT QUENCHED HER INSISTENT THIRST. ETHAN SHROUD INVENTED IT.
SOME OF THE INGREDIENTS WERE QUITE RARE--AND HE KNEW ALL THE SOURCES FOR THEM--
--ALL OF THEM.
HE HAD MEN WATCHING. IF SHE'D TRIED TO RECREATE THE SERUM, HE'D FIND HER AND CAPTURE HER.
IF HE DIDN'T, THE THIRST WOULD OVER-TAKE HER. HE'D ONLY HAVE TO FOLLOW THE TRAIL OF BODIES.
SENATOR!
SENATOR VAN HELSING-- I WANTED TO PERSONALLY EXPRESS MY DEEPEST SYMPATHY AT YOUR LOSS.
THANK YOU, MRS BEDDOES. IT'S APPRE-CIATED.
I DON'T BELIEVE YOU'VE MET MY--MY--
--CHILDHOOD FRIEND, ELLA NORMANDY.
IT'S SO GOOD TO MEET YOU. ADAM'S OFTEN SPOKEN OF YOUR GOOD WORKS.
SHE FOUND A SUBSTITUTE, THOUGH. SHE SURE DID.
WHY, THANK YOU, MISS NORMANDY. I'M SURE IT MUST BE SUCH A COMFORT, HAVING OLD FRIENDS AROUND IN TIMES OF TROUBLE.
OH-- IT MOST CERTAINLY IS! WE'LL SEE YOU AT THE RECEP-TION, WON'T WE?
A NARCOTIC--A DRUG. MIXED WITH ANIMAL BLOOD, IT TOOK AWAY HER BURNING THIRST.

IT ALSO TOOK AWAY HER MEMORY, HER IDENTITY, HER YOUTH.
WHEN SHE WOKE UP, SHE WAS A TEACHER IN A GIRLS' SCHOOL-- AN OLD, BITTER WOMAN.
SHE MAY NEVER KNOW HOW SHE GOT THERE.
IT WAS BLOOD THAT WOKE HER. HOT, SWEET, RICH BLOOD.
SHALL WE, "ELLA?"
IT WAS SO GOOD.
OH, I MEANT TO MENTION --I'VE STOCKPILED THE INGREDIENTS WE NEED FOR YOUR SERUM.
WE CAN MAKE AS MUCH AS YOU NEED.
OH.
THAT'S... NICE.
DO I GLOW?
I LIKE TO THINK I GLOW. I CERTAINLY FEEL LIKE I DO.
IT'S ALMOST TANGIBLE-- THE DELICATE WEB OF NECROMANTIC POWER, FLOWING TO ME FROM THE MEMBERS OF THE UNSEELIE CONGRESS--
--AND FROM BEYOND THEM, FROM EVERY NIGHT CREATURE IN THE COUNTRY, IN ALL THEIR MYRIAD FORMS.
EVERY DEATH AT THE HANDS OF A WALKER-- EVERY SOUL TAKEN BY AN INCUBUS-- EVERY EMOTION DEVOURED BY A FROST-SHADE-- IT ALL FEEDS ME.
AND I LIKE IT.

BUT IT NEVER LASTS--THE POWER FLOWS ON, TO GREAT NUBERUS THE MANY-TONGUED, AND ON TO DREAD CHAOS HIMSELF.
THAT ONCE SATISFIED ME--BUT NO MORE.
TOOMEY IS BEYOND WORDS. HE LOOKS DOWN INTO THE YAWNING PIT--AND HE KNOWS IT GAPES FOR HIM.
I WANT IT ALL, TOOMEY. I WANT THE WORLD TIED IN A BRIGHT RED RIBBON. I WANT VAMPIRELLA AS MY BRIDE. I WANT THE POWER OF NUBERUS FLOWING TO ME.
I CAN ALMOST TASTE IT, TOOMEY.
HE GAVE ETHAN SHROUD HIS SERVICE. HE GAVE HIM HIS TRUST. HE GAVE HIM HIS LOYALTY.
IT'S DANGEROUS, I KNOW. NUBERUS COULD FIND OUT. HE MIGHT ALREADY KNOW--BUT I DON'T THINK SO
I THINK HE'S OLD AND STUPID AND RIPE FOR THE SLAUGHTER--AND THE PROPER AGENT CAN KILL HIM.
THE PROPER AGENT IS HERE, TOOMEY. SHE HAS THE POWER--SHE IS FREE FROM NUBERUS' CONTROL.
IF SHE WERE UNDER MY CONTROL--ALL WOULD BE POSSIBLE. THAT IS WHERE YOU COME IN
HE IS ABOUT TO GIVE HIM HIS LIFE.
YOU'RE GOING TO HELP ME, TOOMEY
AREN'T YOU LUCKY?

THE SUNDERED CIRCLE HAS BEEN SHATTERED ANEW!
BLOOD SHALL HAVE BLOOD!
SWING WIDE THE GATES OF HELL!!!
IN ARLINGTON, ZEDEDIAH HAWKINS LIES IN HIS COFFIN, DREAMING OF BLOOD AND FLESH AND FEAR.
HIS SLEEP TURNS UN-EASY. AND HE DREAMS OF STAKES.
IN DUNWICH, MASSACHUSETTS, THE SHOUNA CLAN HUDDLES TOGETHER FOR REASSURANCE.
IT IS NOT TIME FOR THEM TO SEEK FRESH MEAT-- BUT THEY ARE AWAKE.
AND THEY ARE WARY.
IN FAR-OFF HAWAII, THERE ARE THINGS THAT EVEN THE SHARKS FEAR THEY STALK THE DEEPS, FAR FROM ANY HINT OF SUNLIGHT.
BUT THEY THRASH UNEASILY AND WHICKER AMONG THEMSELVES. THEY WILL SEEK THEIR CAVERNS TODAY--
-- THOUGH THEY DON'T KNOW WHY.
ACROSS THE NATION, THE DARK CREATURES FEEL THE RELEASE OF POWER.
AND IN HELL...
...SOME-THING STIRS

A FUNERAL ENDS WITH AN UNDERTOW--A POWERFUL AND INVISIBLE CURRENT THAT THREATENS TO DRAG THE UNWARY INTO A BOTTOMLESS GULF.
IT'S BEST TO HAVE SOMETHING TO CLING TO.
WE'VE GOT TO FIND A NEW AVENUE OF ATTACK. WITH YOU BACK, I'VE LOST MY TASTE FOR A SUICIDE RUN.
CHELSEA CANTRELL-- SHE WAS ONE OF MY STUDENTS. SHE TOLD ME HE MESMERIZED HER SOMEHOW--MADE HER TASTE HIS BLOOD.
ADAM VAN HELSING HAS ALWAYS BELIEVED IN THE THERAPEUTIC POWER OF WORK.
SHE SAID SHE COULD FEEL HIM IN HER MIND.
THAT GIRL--YOU SAID HE DID SOMETHING TO HER?
SOUNDS LIKE A BINDING SPELL--A SIMPLE ONE THEY CAN USUALLY BE BROKEN.
SEE IF THERE'S ANYTHING IN HERE ABOUT IT.
I-- I DON'T BELIEVE IT!
OVER 4 MILLION COPIES IN PRINT
THE CRIMSON CHRONICLES
THE SHATTERING TRUE STORY OF OMNIPOTENT CREATURES THAT PREDATE MAN -- AND THE SPELLS AND RITUALS THAT HARNESS THEIR POWER
foreword by JOHN A. KEEL

WHAT IS THIS, ADAM?
OH, THAT-- IT CAME OUT ABOUT SIX YEARS AGO. THE CULT OF CHAOS IS LOOKING TO MAKE CONVERTS--
--AND WHAT BETTER WAY TO DO IT THAN THROUGH THE MASS MARKET?
DARK VISIONS
R-RING!
I'VE GOT TO SET THAT; IT'S MY EMERGENCY LINE.
BE RIGHT BACK.
VAN HELSING, NO, NO--SLOW DOWN, PLEASE TAKE A DEEP BREATH.
OVER FOUR MILLION COPIES IN PRINT.
YES--STAY IN THE CHURCH. IT'S THE BEST PLACE FOR YOU. I'LL SEND SOMEONE TO HELP YOU.
THE CRIMSON CHRONICLES. THE BIBLE OF BLOOD. THE MOST EVIL OCCULT VOLUME IN THE WORLD. ONCE THERE WERE ONLY A FEW COPIES IN EXISTENCE NOW IT'S AVAILABLE IN SUPER-MARKETS!
WHAT HAS THIS WORLD BECOME?
TOOMEY'S BODY HAS BEEN LOWERED INTO THE PIT--
--WHERE IT HAS VANISHED.
TO THE TINNY SOUND OF A BRASS BAND AND THE FAINT RUSTLE OF TICKER TAPE, SOMEONE ELSE SLOWLY RISES.
AND WITH HIM RISE MEMORIES-- FRAGMENTS OF THE PAST.

THEY SAID HE WAS TOO YOUNG TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY AS A CANDIDATE, THAT HIS OPPONENT WAS TOO POPULAR.
BUT HE WANTED IT.
HE RAN HARD, AND MADE THE RIGHT DEALS, AND HE BECAME A CONGRESSMAN.
YES...
THEY SAID HIS TIES TO BIG OIL WOULD KEEP HIM OUT OF THE SENATE, THAT HE COULDN'T WIN A STATEWIDE ELECTION.
BUT HE WANTED IT.
HE RAISED MONEY, AND USED IT, AND HE BECAME A SENATOR.
YES.
THEY SAID HE COULDN'T BE PRESIDENT--THAT THERE WERE TOO MANY OTHERS AHEAD OF HIM.
BUT HE WANTED IT.
HE WAITED, AND SUPPORTED THE PARTY, AND HE PLANNED.
YES!
BUT THEN--
-- HE DIED.

HE KNEW THAT IF HE WANTED IT *BADLY* ENOUGH, NOTHING WOULD STOP HIM *FOREVER.*
ARE YOU HE WHOM I HAVE *CALLED?*
I AM KNOWN AS BANE.
HIS VOICE IS *RUSTY.* IT HAS GONE TOO LONG *UNUSED.*
AND WHAT DO YOU *NEED,* BANE?
THE ANSWERS *FLICKER* THROUGH HIS MIND:
FAME, POWER, MONEY RESPECT
EVERYTHING.
AND YOU'RE WELCOME *TO IT,* MY FRIEND.
THERE'S JUST *ONE THING* I'D LIKE YOU TO DO FOR ME.
YOU NEED BUT NAME IT.

NEXT STOP-- WASHINGTON D.C.
HE SHAKES OFF A CHILL AT THE THOUGHT, AND REMINDS HIMSELF-- BUSINESS IS ALWAYS GOOD THERE
IT USED TO BE A GOOD LIFE, BEING ON TOUR. FIRST CLASS SEATS, ATTRACTIVE STEWARDESSES, AND A PLUSH HOTEL AT THE DESTINATION.
AND THERE WERE ALWAYS OTHER TRAVELLERS-- SALESMEN, VACATIONERS, PEOPLE TO MAKE CONVERSATION WITH, TO SWAP STORIES.
BUT THAT WAS BEFORE. PEOPLE DON'T TRAVEL SO MUCH ANY MORE.
THEY HAVEN'T, SINCE THE CHANGE.
IT DIDN'T HAPPEN ALL AT ONCE, COURSE. THERE WAS PLENTY OF WARNING.
EVERYONE KNEW SOMETHING WAS HAPPENING, BUT IT WAS AS IF THEY PRETENDED NOT TO.
AS IF SOMEONE HAD TOLD THE WHOLE COUNTRY-- "JUST IGNORE IT. PRETEND NOTHING'S WRONG, AND NOTHING WILL BE."
AND IT WORKED, FOR A WHILE.
IT JUST DIDN'T WORK FOREVER.
END CHAPTER FIVE

THEY DON'T ALL HEAR IT AT FIRST. BUT THEY WILL.
TAIA HOPEWELL IS WORKING THE BEEFY BOB'S ON WISCONSIN, MAKING SURE THEY'LL BE READY FOR THE DINNER RUSH, WHEN IT STARTS.
BOB'S
IN MY HEAD! IN MY HEAD! GET OUT!!
SHE DOESN'T KNOW HIS NAME, BUT SHE THINKS OF HIM AS "OLD REGGIE." HE COMES IN EVERY DAY DURING LULL TIME. COFFEE, FRIES, DOUBLE CHEESY-BEEF.
YOU! YOU DOING IT! ALL OF YOU UNDERGROUND PEOPLE!
FOOD ADDITIVES! CHEMICALS! GET OUT OF MY MIND!
EASY NOW, PAL! SIMMER DOWN!
I KNOW! I KNOW!
HEAT-POLYMERIZED BINDER! MONOSODIUM GLUTAMATE GUAR GUM!
GELATIN! PLASTIC! CARNUBO WAX!
COME ON, MAN! YOU'RE GOIN' FOR A RIDE!
AND NOBODY ASK WHAT'S IN IT!
WHY DIDN'T NOBODY ASK?!
WHY?!

CHAPTER SIX
LION WINE
(that which irritates)
WHAT'S IN THIS STUFF, ANYWAY?
HM?
WELL, THERE'S PLASMA, OF COURSE--AND ST. JOHN'S WORT--
I KNOW WHAT'S IN IT, ADAM. IT WAS A RHETORICAL QUESTION.
I REALLY SHOULD GO--I NEED TO CHECK ON CHELSEA.

"BUT--"
BACK AS SOON AS I CAN.
AND LIKE THAT, SHE'S GONE.
THE GIRL RUNS INTO HER AND HELEN-ANN ZIMMER THINKS, FILTHY WELFARE SLUT! CAN'T THEY STICK TO THEIR OWN NEIGHBORHOODS?
WHERE DID THAT COME FROM, SHE WONDERS.
THEN SHE HEARS THE SONG.
AT FIRST SHE THINKS IT'S JUST THE CANNED MUSIC--BUT THE SPEAKERS ARE PLAYING AN ALL-STRINGS ARRANGEMENT OF "GOOD GOLLY MISS MOLLY."
AND THIS...
COUNTRY-CLUB COW
...THIS IS SOMETHING ELSE.

ANY MINUTE NOW, A COP WILL COME AND TELL HIM YOU CAN'T TETHER HORSES TO PARKING METERS IN CHEVY CHASE.
BUT HE'S PROBABLY GOT TIME FOR A DRINK FIRST. IT'S BEEN A LONG DRIVE
Oscar's
A SHOT OF YOUR FINEST IRISH, MY GOOD MAN--WITH WHATEVER'S ON DRAUGHT TO CHASE IT.
TAPS ARE DOWN. BOTTLED DO YOU?
IT'LL HAVE TO I SUPPOSE.
CLINK
GUS PULASKI KNOWS. THAT GODDAMN GOOK SPILLED GAS ON HIS NEW PAINT JOB ON PURPOSE.
--COME TO THIS COUNTRY TAKIN' ALL THE
--TALK TO THE MANAGER NOT BE IN MY FACE--
HONG BINH TRANH KNOWS, TOO. A DIFFERENT TRUTH.
THE MUSIC IS SOFT--SOFTER THAN GUS AND HONG'S VOICES...
--BORN HERE--
--TO SPEAK THE LANGUAGE--
...BUT THEY CANNOT IGNORE IT.
FILTHY THIEF...
I GOT MY DIGNITY, MS. CLAY! YOU SHOW SOME RESPECT, OR--
BY THE TIME LEANN DICHINSON HEARS THE SONG, ARDELIA CLAY IS DEAD.
ONE LESS TO HEAR.

GEORGETOWN. NO SONG PLAYS HERE. BUT VAMPIRELLA FEELS A CHILL NONETHELESS SHE WAS LOST AMONG THESE COBBLESTONES FOR SO LONG...
N-NO!
Y-YOU'RE ONE OF THEM! YOU T-TURNED FROM A BAT!
BUT--IT'S DAYLIGHT! YOU CAN'T COME OUT! IT'S D-DAY-LIGHT!
DON'T BE SCARED--
S-STAY BACK!
YOU CAN'T COME N-NEAR ME!
FOR A MOMENT, THE THIRST STABS AT HER, AND SHE WANTS TO TAKE THIS WOMAN. HERE AND NOW.
BLOATED PREDATOR PIG!
TEACH YOU TO KOWTOW TO THE MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS!
AAAAAAAA!!
WHAT'S THAT MUSIC?
SANDEE GUNDERSOHN HAS BROKEN EVERY WINDOW IN HER HOUSE AND S ABOUT TO KILL HER BABY WHEN THE POLICE CAR DRIVES INTO THE POLE.
NOT MINE CAN'T BE MINE SWITCHED AT BIRTH AT THE HOSPITAL THOSE STUPID--
DIDN'T THEY THINK I'D KNOW MY OWN--
SKONCH!
THE MUSIC--THE MUSIC--
LISTEN--LISTEN--
--PRETEND I CAN'T SEE YOU SNEERING AT ME--
SQUEEEE
EVERYBODY SING!
HAP-PY DAYS ARE HERE A-GAIN...
THEY ARE PASSION-ATE. THEY ARE RELEASED. THEY ARE READY--
--AND HE IS HERE.

BANE IS HERE!!
THE SKIES A-BOVE ARE CLEAR A-GAIN...
THEY ALL LOOK UP THEY ALL SEE HIM. AND THE SONG TAKES THEM.
A CHICKEN IN EVERY POT. TWO CARS IN EVERY GARAGE MORE FOR YOUR DOLLAR.
IT HAS BEEN SO LONG; SO VERY LONG THEIR EYES SHINE WITH THE MAJESTY OF THE PROMISE.
SOMEWHERE WITHIN THEM, THEY KNOW THE PROMISE IS A LIE. BUT THEY DON'T CARE. THEY HAVE LEARNED TO LIVE WITH LIES.
AND THE PROMISE IS SO BEAUTIFUL.

SHE CHOKES THE THIRST BACK AND IT GOES.
SILENCE!
YOU SAW NOTHING-- JUST A WOMAN WALKING OUT OF AN ALLEYWAY.
JUST THAT!
THE MESMERISM THAT IS HER BIRTHRIGHT WORKS DIFFERENTLY ON DIFFERENT PEOPLE.
ON THIS WOMAN, IT IS IMMEDIATE AND DEEP.
SHE IS HELPLESS, UN-RESISTING -- AN EASY VICTIM. HOW DARE SHE TREAT VAMPIRELLA AS A MONSTER?
SHE SHOULD COUNT HERSELF LUCKY!
"PASTEURIZED HOMO-GENIZED FERMENTED MALT BEVERAGE?" WHAT IS THIS STUFF?
IT'S LOW IN CHOLESTEROL AND CALORIES.
THERE'S SOME SORTA RULE -- THE HOPS OR SOME-THING.
CAN'T CALL IT REAL BEER IF IT'S MADE THIS WAY.
THE GREAT PENDRAGON CLUCKS HIS TONGUE.
BUT IT'S BEER BY ME.
THAT A DAY WOULD COME WHEN THE GOVERNMENT HAS HIGHER STANDARDS THAN A BARTENDER.
GODDAM FAIRY SONOFABITCH LOOKIN' DOWN HIS NOSE AT GOOD AMERICAN--
THAT MUSIC--
--IS THAT A JUKE BOX?

UP CONNECTICUT AND WEST ON MILITARY ROAD. IT'S A PARADE NOW.
THEY SING THE SONG, IN A LOW MURMUR, LIKE CHILDREN IN CHURCH --
SING
SONG
CHEER
--FOLLOWING ALONG WITH A HYMN THEY ALMOST KNOW.
THE WORLD IS AN ENGINE-- A GREAT PUMPING THING OF VALVES AND PISTONS AND DRIVE SHAFTS, VIBRATING WITH UNIMAGINABLE ENERGY.
A WORD IN A CABINET MEMBER'S EAR, A FAVOR FROM A LOBBYIST-- AND THE ENGINE WILL PERFORM FOR YOU.
BUT FAVORS AREN'T FREE.
ONLY ONE PART OF THE ENGINE IS FREE -- THE POWER THAT MAKES IT GO. YOU NEED IT. YOU HAVE TO HAVE IT.
THE ENGINE IS MIGHTY, BUT IT IS USELESS WITHOUT THE POWER. AND THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO GET IT.
YOU JUST ASK.

BING BONG
BING BONG
OH.
OH, PLEASE EXCUSE ME, YOUNG LADY!
FOR A MOMENT THERE, I THOUGHT YOU WERE OUR MISS NORMANDY--
--BUT YOU'RE NOT!
I'M A FRIEND OF CHELSEA CANTRELL'S. I NEED TO SPEAK TO HER.
UP WISCONSIN NOW--
--AND HE NEEDS MORE.
MORE COME AND STILL MORE, AND IT IS NOT ENOUGH.
THEY GIVE THEMSELVES TO BANE. HIS SONG TOUCHES THEM AND THEY GIVE THEIR FEAR TO HIM.
THE ONE THE MAN WHO WOKE HIM WANTS IS NOT HERE.
BUT IT DOES NOT MATTER. SHE WILL COME.

I'M AFRAID YOU MADE A TRIP FOR NOTHING CHELSEA'S LEFT THE SCHOOL.
WAS IT ILLNESS? A PROBLEM AT HOME?
LEFT THIS MORNING, SHE DID.
OH, I WOULDN'T KNOW THAT.

BUT YOU KNOW-- THERE MAY BE A FORWARDING ADDRESS. WHY DON'T YOU POP IN AND I'LL CHECK THAT FOR YOU.
THE GIRLS ARE ALL ON THE PLAYING FIELDS --I WAS JUST LISTENING TO MY CALL-IN PROGRAM...
MOLLY McARDLE NEVER VOLUNTEERED TO GIVE OUT INFORMATION IN HER LIFE! SOMETHING'S HAPPENED!

KLAK!

SKIES A-B

SKIES A-BOVE
CLEAR A-GAIN
AND HE NEEDS MORE.

--TRAFFIC HELI-COPTER REPORTS MULTIPLE FIRES IN CHEVY CHASE, AS WELL AS OVERTURNED VEHICLES ALONG THE MAIN ROADS WE CONTINUE WITH THIS LIVE COV-ERAGE.
--STILL UNABLE TO RAISE THE LOCAL FIRE DEPARTMENT, PETE--I DO SEE SOME TRUCKS COM-ING FROM THE NORTH NOW--

NO. THERE'S NO CARD --BUT AS I RECALL, SHE LEFT WITH HER UNCLE.
A MR. SHROUD. NICE MAN HE WAS, TOO
NOW ISN'T THAT RUDE? DIDN'T EVEN CLOSE THE DOOR!
--STRANGE THING IS, PETE--I CAN'T SEE ANYONE ON THE STREETS--
MONTOYA? VAN HELSING, IN WASHINGTON I'VE GOT ANOTHER TARGET FOR YOU.
HARDLY. --I JUST FIELD INFORMATION IT'S PEOPLE LIKE YOU THAT DO THE REAL WORK.
EIGHT PEOPLE--TRAPPED IN A CHURCH IN BOZEMAN, FIRST CONGREGATIONAL.
THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS, BUT IT'S TAKEN TWO OF THEIR PARTY SO FAR -- JUST LEAVES BONES BEHIND.
THEY'LL BE VERY GLAD TO SEE YOU, I'M SURE
ADAM VAN HELSING MAY NOT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SAVE HIS FATHER-- BUT HE WORKS HARD AT SAVING HIS COUNTRY,
IT'S THE LEAST HE CAN DO.
--FASTER, FASTER.--
--FAILED TO SAVE ONE--NOT GOING TO LOSE

SI, MONTOYA! GRAZIE, MONTOYA!
IT'S PEOPLE LIKE YOU DO ALL THE REAL WORK, MONTOYA!
SHOWBOAT! GRANDSTAND! STORMTROOPER GLORYHOUND! WHO DOES HE THINK--
...A-BOVE ♫ ARE CLEAR A-GAIN...
THE SONG PLAYS NO MORE--NOT IN THIS PART OF TOWN.
IT HAS PASSED BY. IT HAS DONE IT'S WORK.
ROCKVILLE PART
FIRE DEPT
WE GOT IT UNDER CONTROL, CAPTAIN. LOOKS LIKE IT STARTED AS A GREASE FIRE!
THERE'S JUST ONE THING I DON'T GET--
--WHERE DID ALL THE PEOPLE GO?

END CHAPTER SIX

NIGHT IS COMING--
NIGHT IS COMING AND ADAM'S IN TROUBLE--
NIGHT IS COMING AND ADAM'S IN TROUBLE AND SHROUD HAS CHELSEA AND THERE'S A PAIN ACROSS HER BACK--
CRK
HE'S COMING!
THERE'S A PAIN ACROSS HER BACK WHERE HER WING MUSCLES ARE STRAINED BECAUSE BATS AREN'T BUILT TO FLY THIS FAST AND ADAM'S IN TROUBLE--
ADAM'S IN TROUBLE AND SHROUD HAS CHELSEA AND HE KNOWS SHE'LL HAVE TO CHOOSE AND DAMN HIM ANYWAY!
DAMN HIM!

CHAPTER SEVEN
SHEEP WINE
(that which) stupefies
FRIENDS! NEIGHBORS! AMERICANS!
THE GREAT SIDES OF BEEF SIZZLE AND POP AS THEY TURN ON THE SPITS AND THE BEER FLOWS LIKE WATER. IN A POLITICAL RALLY TURNOUT IS WHAT MATTERS, AND YOU OFFER WHATEVER WILL MAKE THEM COME.
IN THE SHELTERED GROVES OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES FOR HEALTH, THE PEOPLE OF CHEVY CHASE HAVE TURNED OUT.

TIME AND TIME AGAIN, I HAVE COME TO YOU AND ASKED YOU FOR POWER. AND YOU HAVE GIVEN IT TO ME.
AND I THANK YOU FOR IT.
BUT WHAT IS POWER? THE DAY AFTER THE ELECTION, THE MAN WITH A ONE-VOTE MARGIN HAS AS MUCH POWER AS THE MAN WITH A LANDSLIDE.
AND I NEED MORE THAN THAT. MUCH MORE.
WHEN THEY GIVE YOU POWER, YOU CAN MAKE THE MACHINE GO. BUT THEY STILL HAVE EYES.
I COME TO YOU TODAY TO ASK FOR YOUR TRUST!
YOUR TRUST!
BUT WHEN THEY GIVE YOU THEIR TRUST--
--THEN THEY DON'T SEE WITH THEIR EYES ANY MORE. THEY SEE WITH YOUR PROMISES.
AND WHEN THEY SEE WITH YOUR PROMISES-- AH, WHEN THEY SEE WITH YOUR PROMISES--
--THEY WILL BELIEVE ANYTHING.
I NEED YOUR TRUST MY FRIENDS.
I NEED IT!
WHAT AM I GOING TO DO WITH YOU, CHELSEA?

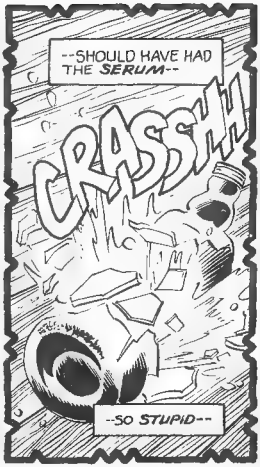
SHE DOESN'T ANSWER, EVEN IF SHE KNEW WHAT TO SAY, HER THROAT IS TOO TIGHT WITH FEAR TO SPEAK.
I HAD SUCH PLANS, GLORIOUS PLANS.
YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN A QUEEN. A GODDESS.
DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS IS?
SKITCH SKRITCH
IN CALM, SOOTHING TONES, HE TELLS HER HOW THE SANGUIVIRE DRINKS HUMAN BLOOD--HOW ITS BITE, IN CONCERT WITH THE RIGHT SPELLS, CAN TURN A HUMAN INTO SOMETHING VERY LIKE A VAMPIRE.
BUT NOT A COMMON VAMPIRE, CURSED TO HELL AND ANSWERING TO DREAD CHAOS-- BUT A VAMPIRE WHO COULD WALK THE DAY, WHO COULD TOLERATE THE CROSS--A VAMPIRE WHO WOULD ANSWER TO HIM, AND HIM ALONE.
HE SMILES AS HE TELLS HER, BUT IT IS NOT A COMFORTING SMILE.
I WOULD HAVE MADE YOU INTO A NEW VAMPIRELLA-- WOULDN'T THAT HAVE BEEN NICE?
TAKE IT AWAY...
SHE DOES NOT MEAN THE BUG, THOUGH ITS OBSCENE TWITCHINGS MAKE HER FLINCH.
WHEN HE CAME TO HER SCHOOL TODAY, HE CROOKED HIS KNUCKLES AT HER AND TOOK AWAY HER FEAR.
BUT THAT WAS BEFORE. SHE'S BACK NOW, YOU KNOW--
--AND I DON'T NEED TWO.
JUST TOOK IT AWAY. LIKE A BUTTER PLATE INTO THE KITCHEN.

PLEASE-- TAKE IT AWAY...
...I'M SO SCARED...
IF ONLY HE WOULD CROOK HIS KNUCKLES AGAIN...
THAT CARAVAN--
IT CAN'T BE--
--CAN IT?

T-TIK! IT AWAY. I'M SO SCARED.
OF COURSE YOU'RE SCARED, CHELSEA.
IT'S NO FUN IF YOU'RE NOT SCARED.
I'VE GOT TO LEAVE NOW, BUT DON'T WORRY--I'LL BE BACK SOON.
AND THEN HE'S GONE.
AND HE DIDN'T TAKE ANYTHING AWAY AT ALL.
SKRITCH SKRITCH
DARKNESS HAS ARRIVED. ALMOST READY NOW.
HE NEEDS THEM SO MUCH BUT HE HOLDS HIMSELF BACK--
IF YOU TAKE THEM TOO SOON--
PENDRAGON IS YOUNG AGAIN AND PLAYING THE O'BRIEN RALLY IN BOSTON AND THE APPLAUSE IS REAL.
AND THE MAN IS TELLING HIM HE DID GOOD AND THERE'LL BE MORE RALLIES COMING UP.
AND HE COULD SEE HIS DAUGHTER'S EYES SHINING IN THE FRONT ROW.
--IF YOU TAKE THEM TOO SOON, IT DOESN'T WORK.
--THEY'RE JUST DEAD, THAT'S ALL.

FOR ADAM VAN HELSING, IT'S CAPITOL HILL. HIS FIRST DAY.
HE'S HEARING AGAIN WHAT SENATOR BUNTON SAID TO HIM. POOR MAN. IT WAS HIS LAST YEAR ON THE HILL.
WHATEVER HAPPENED TO HIM?
IT'S NO GOOD IF THEY'RE NOT YOURS-- NOT FULLY YOURS-- WHEN YOU TAKE THEM--
BUT HE NEEDS THEM SO MUCH--
ARE THEY HIS?
THEY'RE HIS.
MORGAN RITT IS GETTING THE WORD THAT REAGAN AND ANTITRUST ARE OIL AND WATER AND MAX IS SAYING HE'LL HAVE TWO DAYS HEAD START AT GENCORP--
--AND THEN MAX IS GONE AND HE'S IN THE MUD AND THERE ARE THINGS AROUND HIM--
--AND IT HURTS--
CRUNK
--AND HE'D SCREAM BUT HE'S CHOKING ON HIS OWN BLOOD AND--
THE THOUGHT GOES THROUGH HER THAT IF PENDRAGON'S HERE HE'S IN TROUBLE TOO--
--AND SHE TURNS TO GO--

--AND IT'S THERE LIKE A WHITE-HOT POKER INSIDE HER--
HUHHHH!
--AND SHE CAN'T MOVE AND SHE CAN'T STAND AND IT WON'T BE IGNORED NOW--


--SHOULD HAVE HAD THE SERUM--
CRASSH!
--SO STUPID--

--OUTSIDE--GOTTA MAKE IT OUTSIDE--
--FRESH AIR'LL HELP--

BANE WALKS AMONG THEM AS THEY'RE TAKEN, DRINKING IN THEIR TRUST AS THEY DIE.
HE WANTS TO UNLEASH THE CREATURES, AND TAKE THEM ALL AT ONCE. BUT ONCE THEY'RE TAKEN, THEY'RE GONE.
HE'LL HOLD OFF AS LONG AS HE CAN.

MARJORIE EMMONS IS RAISING A GLASS TO JACK ON ELECTION NIGHT IN '60 AND HOPING HE'LL LOOK HER WAY WHEN SHE'S TAKEN.
STAN GEDDES IS TWELVE AGAIN, ON A TRIP TO SEE THE WHITE HOUSE.

AN AMERICAN FLAG FLUTTERS OVER GRENADA--
TRUMAN WAVES TO THE REPORTERS AND GOES FISHING--
--AND--
AND--
IS SOMEONE THINKING OF BUNTON?

--IF YOU WANT TO SURVIVE AROUND HERE, YOU LITTLE SNOT--AND IF YOU'RE SMART, WHICH I CAN SEE ALREADY YOU'RE NOT, YOU'LL LISTEN!
IT'S DAMNED SIMPLE, IS WHAT IT IS!
HE IS--HE'S THINKING OF BUNTON!
THE PEOPLE ABOVE YOU--A COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN, A CABINET MEMBER--THEY GET THE GIFTS!
PEOPLE ON YOUR LEVEL--ANOTHER SENATOR, A REPORTER OF WEIGHT--THEY GET THE DEALS!
PEOPLE BELOW YOU--YOUR WHOLE GODDAMN CONSTITUENCY, SAY--
--THEY JUST GET THE PROMISES. YOU GET ME?
NO OFFENSE, SIR, BUT THAT'S A VERY CYNICAL--
WASTING MY TIME, KID! COME BACK IN A YEAR AND TELL ME THEN--
"--TELL ME PEOPLE ON TOP GIVE AWAY ANYTHING FOR FREE!"
SSSELEOUSSS, REPRESSSENTING THE APTARA OF THE NORTHWESSST, MR. SHROUD.
MY NESSST HASSS MADE A PACT WITH YOU, WITH THISSS UNSSSEELIÉ CONGRESSSS. WE HUNT FOR YOU--WE HARVESSST FOR YOU--
--AND WE ARE GLAD TO DO IT, FOR WE SSSERVE CHAOSSS--
--WE LIVE TO SSSEE GREAT NUBERUSSS WALK THE EARTH AGAIN ASSS IN DAYSSS OF ELDESSST MEMORY--
BUT IT HASSS BEEN YEARSSS! SSSURELY WE HAVE AMASSSSED ENOUGH POWER TO OPEN THE GATES!
SSSURELY IT ISSS TIME FOR NUBERUSSS TO COME TO USSS AGAIN!

THE SACRIFICES OF YOUR NEST--AND OF ALL OF US--HAVE BEEN GREAT INDEED, SELEQUS. BUT THEY MUST CONTINUE.
WE ARE NOT YET READY.
BUT SSSURELY--

SHZAK

WE ARE NOT YET READY.
ANY OTHER DOUBTERS?

VERY WELL. THE NIGHT'S FEAST AWAITS US IN THE ANTEROOM. MISTER TOOMEY IS NOT WITH US, SO YOU'LL HAVE TO FETCH IT YOURSELVES.
NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME...

-I HAVE OTHER BUSINESS TO ATTEND TO.

NO! HIS THOUGHTS OF BUNTON FADE!
HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN TAKEN WHILE BUNTON WAS IN HIS MIND--WHILE RESPECT AND FEAR WERE UPPERMOST!

PERHAPS HIS THOUGHTS WILL RETURN TO BUNTON--
IN HIS YOUNGER DAYS PERHAPS, WHEN HIS NAME WAS DISCUSSED FOR THE VICE PRESIDENCY--
PERHAPS--

SKRITCH
SKRITCH

SHE HEARS FOOTSTEPS--AND KNOWS IT MUST BE HIM.
AT LEAST SHE'S NOT ALONE ANY MORE, SHE TELLS HERSELF. THAT'S GOOD, RIGHT?

RIGHT?

HIS THOUGHTS DO NOT RETURN TO BUNTON, BUT BANE CAN WAIT NO LONGER.
HE WILL BE TAKEN.
LET HIM GO, DEMON--

END CHAPTER SEVEN

THERE IS A *GIRL*, THE DARK MAN WITH THE DARK NAME HAD SAID.

A *WOMAN* BY NOW--IT HAS BEEN YEARS SINCE I FIRST *SAW HER*. A DEATH AND A LIFE AGO, WHEN I HAD A *DIFFERENT FACE*...

SHE CAME OUT OF NOWHERE, OUT OF THE *SNOW*, BABBLING STORIES OF A PLANET WHERE *RIVERS* RAN WITH *BLOOD*--

OF A HARROWING JOURNEY ACROSS THE *GULF OF SPACE*.

ARRANT *NONSENSE*, OF COURSE. NOT A WORD OF IT *TRUE*.

BUT SHE HAD A BEAUTY--A *RIPENESS* THAT I COULD NOT IGNORE.

IT WAS *GREAT NUBERUS*, WHO REVEALED TO ME WHO AND WHAT SHE *TRULY WAS*--NUBERUS WHO *COMMANDED ME* TO DO THAT WHICH I WOULD HAVE DONE *IN ANY CASE*.

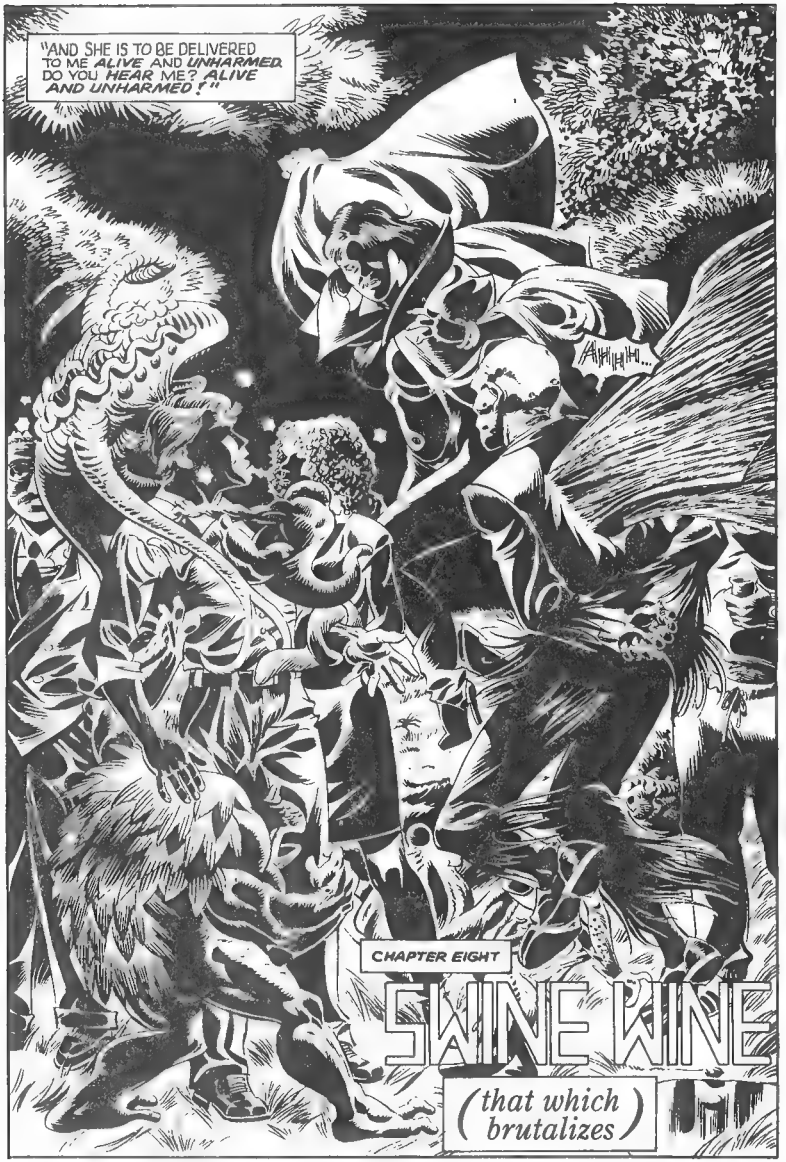
HE HAD *HIS* REASONS FOR WANTING HER HEART AND SOUL BOUND TO CHAOS--AND I HAD *MINE* FOR WANTING HER BOUND TO *ME*.

IN THE END, HOWEVER, IT WAS *I* WHO FELL--LOSING TO HER FIRST MY *SELF* AND THEN MY *LIFE*.

BUT I DIED KNOWING THAT I WOULD *RETURN*--KNOWING THAT SHE WOULD BE MINE. AND IF I COULD NOT WIN HER *HEART*, I WOULD BREAK HER SPIRIT, AND THAT WOULD BE *ENOUGH*.

SHE IS *HERE*, THE DARK MAN SAID, HIS VOICE GROWING SOFT. I WILL *SHOW YOU* WHERE.

SHE IS TO BE *FOUND*, AND SHE IS TO BE *CAPTURED*--


"AND SHE IS TO BE DELIVERED TO ME ALIVE AND UNHARMED. DO YOU HEAR ME? ALIVE AND UNHARMED!"
AHHHHH...
CHAPTER EIGHT
SWINE WINE
(that which brutalizes)

HE CAN FEEL HER NEED--ALMOST AS GREAT AS HIS.
YOU ARE EVERYTHING HE SAID--
--AND MORE.

IT DRIVES HER, CONSUMES HER-- BUT SHE WILL NOT GIVE IN TO IT.
DOES SHE HOLD BACK THE WAY HE LIKES TO-- TO MAKE THE RELIEF THAT MUCH SWEETER?
NO. IT'S SOMETHING ELSE. SOMETHING-- ALIEN TO HIM.

THE MUSIC DOES NOT TOUCH HER--HER NEED POUNDS IN HER EARS AND DROWNS IT OUT.
A PROMISE IS NOT ENOUGH FOR HER.
HE WILL HAVE TO MAKE HER A DEAL.

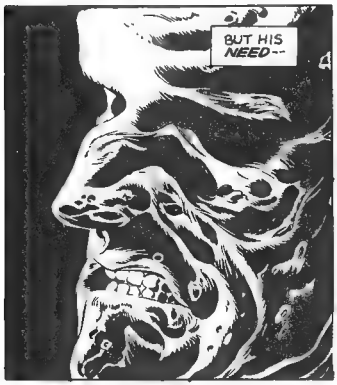
COME TO ME, BEAUTIFUL ONE. COME TO ME. AND I WILL SLAKE YOUR THIRST.

YOU CAN HAVE THIS ONE. I DON'T NEED HIM.
YOU CAN HAVE HIS BLOOD.
ADAM VAN HELSING IS HIRING HIS FIRST SECRETARY. THERE ARE DOZENS OF APPLICANTS.

HE DID NOT LIKE BUNTON.
SHE'S SO YOUNG-- AND THAT SMILE--!

HIS CREATURES ARE SMOKE TO HER-- NO MORE THAN DREAMS.
BELIEF IS NECESSARY TO MAKE THEM SOLID.
I SAID-- LET HIM GO!
SPAK
WHERE DID SHE GO? SHE WAS SMILING AT HIM--!
BLOOD--
BLOOD ALL AROUND--
SO MUCH OF IT--
SHE WILL BITE AND CLAW--
AND TEAR AND DRINK AND SPLASH AND IT WILL BE GOOD SO GOOD--
AND SHE WILL LAUGH AND THE THIRST WILL BE GONE--
AND SHE WILL HAVE MORE MORE MORE--
UNTIL THERE IS NO MORE AND--
NO!
NO.
PUSH IT BACK, PUSH IT BACK--
CONCENTRATE--
ADAM NEEDS YOU--

AND HE OPENS THE DOOR AND THE MAN SAYS "IRS" AND IT'S NOT A NICE SMILE AT ALL--
AND JFK's HEAD SNAPS ONE WAY, THEN THE OTHER--HIS BLOOD ON JACKIE'S DRESS--
AND THE CANDIDATE--HE'S BITING HER BABY--
HIS PEOPLE ARE STIRRING. THE PROMISE IS FADING. AND SOON THEY WILL SEE AGAIN.


BUT HIS NEED--

HE REMEMBERS SOMETHING BUNTON WOULD HAVE TOLD THE YOUNG ONE.
SOMETHING BUNTON TOLD A LOT OF PEOPLE, ONCE THEY REALIZED IT WAS TOO LATE.

"IF A DEAL'S GOING TO BE BROKEN," BUNTON WOULD SAY, "THE FIRST MAN WHO BREAKS IT IS THE WINNER.
"IF YOU WANT TO BE A LOSER, HONOR ALL YOUR DEALS."

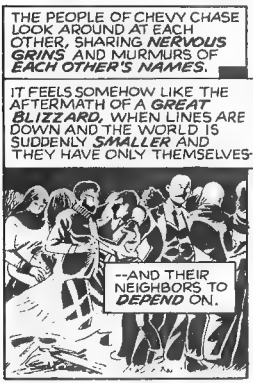
THE DARK MAN WILL BE DISAPPOINTED. BUT HE ONLY WANTS HER--
AND I...

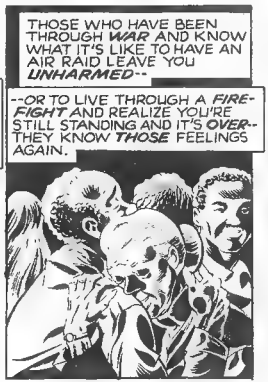
...I NEED YOU!
NUH.
IT'S--
IT'S LIKE FIGHTING A FREIGHT TRAIN, BUT IT'S INSIDE HER SKULL--
AND IT'S ROARING AT HER AND THERE'S NOWHERE TO RUN AND IT'S SO STRONG--
AND SHE'S STRONG BUT NOT THIS STRONG SHE WAS NEVER THIS STRONG NOT ON THE BEST DAY OF HER LIFE--
SHE WAS ALWAYS FIGHTING TWO FIGHTS THE ONE ON THE OUTSIDE AND THE ONE ON THE INSIDE--
ALWAYS HOLDING BACK HER--
HER--
--HER OWN FREIGHT TRAIN--

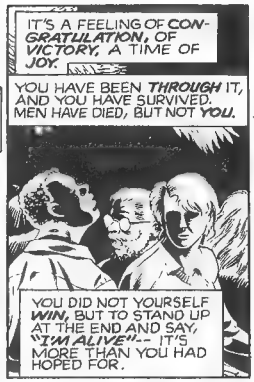
SHE LETS IT GO AND IT ROARS UP OUT OF THE DARK--
AND THERE'S NO BLOOD IN HIM BUT THERE'S SOMETHING--
SLP
SLP
SHE DRAINS HIS ESSENCE THROUGH THE HOLES IN HIS THROAT--
--AS HE DRAWS HERS OUT OF HER THOUGHTS AND DREAMS.
BACK AND FORTH IT GOES--
HE SHUTS DOWN HER CONSCIOUS MIND-- TURNS OFF HER SENSES--
--BUT STILL SHE FEEDS-- AND FEEDS--
--AND FEEDS.
HE IS TOO STRONG TO ALLOW THIS!
HE IS BANE! NOTHING MORTAL IS A MATCH FOR HIM!
HE IS CONFIDENT! HE IS INDOMITABLE!
HIS MIND SHOUTS THE WORDS--
--AND WHEN HE REALIZES IT'S HIMSELF HE'S TRYING TO CONVINCE, NOT HER, THAT HE KNOWS HE'S LOST.
IT'S LIKE BUNTON USED TO SAY: "IT TAKES TWO TO FIGHT, SON--

"--BUT ONLY ONE TO LOSE."

VAMPIRELLA?
ADAM! PEN!


THE PEOPLE OF CHEVY CHASE LOOK AROUND AT EACH OTHER, SHARING NERVOUS GRINS AND MURMURS OF EACH OTHER'S NAMES.
IT FEELS SOMEHOW LIKE THE AFTERMATH OF A GREAT BLIZZARD, WHEN LINES ARE DOWN AND THE WORLD IS SUDDENLY SMALLER AND THEY HAVE ONLY THEMSELVES--
--AND THEIR NEIGHBORS TO DEPEND ON.


THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN THROUGH WAR AND KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO HAVE AN AIR RAID LEAVE YOU UNHARMED--
--OR TO LIVE THROUGH A FIRE-FIGHT AND REALIZE YOU'RE STILL STANDING AND IT'S OVER--THEY KNOW THOSE FEELINGS AGAIN.


IT'S A FEELING OF CON-GRATULATION, OF VICTORY, A TIME OF JOY.
YOU HAVE BEEN THROUGH IT, AND YOU HAVE SURVIVED. MEN HAVE DIED, BUT NOT YOU.
YOU DID NOT YOURSELF WIN, BUT TO STAND UP AT THE END AND SAY, "I'M ALIVE"-- IT'S MORE THAN YOU HAD HOPED FOR.

YOU'LL TAKE IT AND BE GLAD.
I- I HAD NO IDEA--
IT'S FUNNY, ISN'T IT? YOU NEVER DO--
--BUT HERE WE ARE ANYWAY!

I THOUGHT I'D LOST YOU BOTH--
BUT WE'RE TOGETHER AGAIN, AND THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS!

NOW COME ON, PENDRAGON--
--WHERE'VE YOU'VE BEEN, WHAT'VE YOU DONE, WHO'VE YOU SEEN? I WANT TO HEAR EVERYTHING!
IT'S LIKE A DRUG-- A DRUG THAT CAN'T BE PRESCRIBED, STOLEN OR BOUGHT--

--AND IT LASTS ALL THE WAY HOME...
--THAT TIME IN MEXICO, WHEN YOU WERE KIDNAPPED?
BY THE CULT OF THE DANCING SORCERER?
NO, NO-- YOU TOLD ME ABOUT THAT. IT WAS A DIFFERENT CULT. HUITZI- SOMETHING...

HA HA HA HA HA HA

RRRINNGG
THE TELEPHONE KILLS THEIR LAUGHTER, KILLS IT DEAD.
THERE IS MORE TO THE WORLD THAN YOU THREE, IT SAYS. REMEMBER?

WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU TO COME HOME, IT SAYS. AND WE'VE GOT SUCH A LOVELY SURPRISE...
HELLO? VAN HELSING RESIDENCE.
MISS N'NOR-MANDY?
H-HE SAID THAT'S NOT YOUR NAME, BUT I DON'T--I DON'T WANT TO CALL YOU THAT OTHER THING.

WHO IS--?
HE TOLD ME TO TELL YOU SOMETHING-- WROTE IT DOWN FOR ME--

I am buried but not dead
I am beneath an address in Pennsylvania but not far from home
I am in death's power guarded by a dead man
I am lonely; will you visit me?

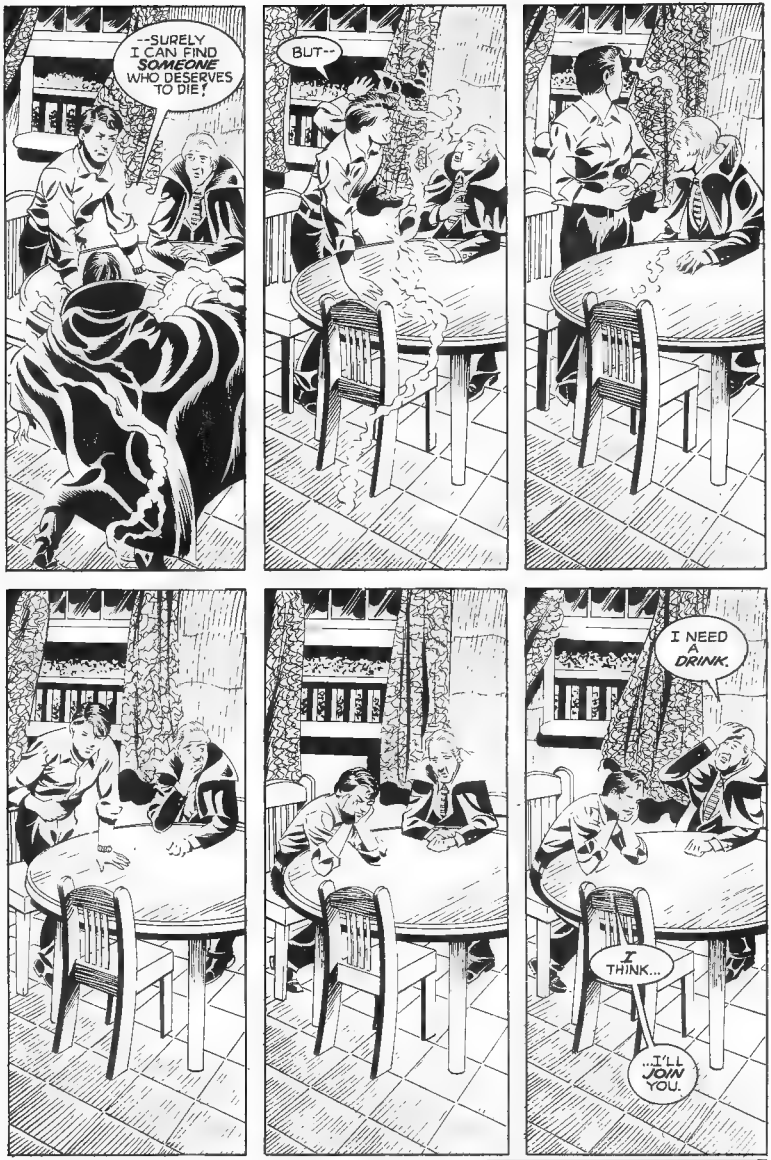
CLIK
DAMN HIM...
THERE IS A HOLLOWNESS IN HER BELLY THAT WASN'T THERE A MOMENT AGO.

BANE'S FLUIDS WERE NO SUBSTITUTE FOR THE REAL THING--
--OR MAYBE SHE'S JUST MAD--
BUT THERE'S BLOOD--
BLOOD ON HER HANDS.

VAMPIRELLA-- YOU DON'T NEED TO--
I'LL GET YOUR SERUM--
NO!

MY THIRST ISN'T A CURSE-- IT'S A WEAPON! AND WE NEED ALL THE WEAPONS WE HAVE!
IF I'D TAKEN THE SERUM EARLIER, I'D BE DEAD NOW! WE'D ALL BE DEAD!
BUT--

SAVE THE SERUM-- IT WILL BE ALL RIGHT FOR EMERGENCIES. BUT IN THE MEANTIME...
THE WORLD HAS GONE BAD IN THE LAST TEN YEARS.
IT'S CRAWLING WITH EVIL THINGS-- EVIL PEOPLE--


--SURELY I CAN FIND SOMEONE WHO DESERVES TO DIE!
BUT--
I NEED A DRINK.
I THINK...
...I'LL JOIN YOU.
END CHAPTER EIGHT—CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE

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PACKAGER'S WHINE (that which explains)

by Richard Howell

You hold in your hands another issue in the horror-adventure series *Vampirella: Morning in America*. Vampirella, as you no doubt are aware, is the premier horror-adventure heroine of the 70's (partially because her exploits began in 1969, so she got a head start), and helmed 112 issues of her own black-and-white magazine before Warren Publishing ceased its publication in 1983. Some of her best early adventures were reprinted in the *Vampirella versus the Cult of Chaos* trade paperback collection issued in June 1991 (still available, too—ask your comics store to re-order one for you!).

The current series, *Vampirella: Morning in America*, picks up ten years after the lovely adventuress' last appearance (a slight time compression adds so much to the drama of the situation), and sees her reawakening in a much darker and far more dangerous world than the one she departed. Washington D.C. is ruled by a quasi-governmental body of monsters known as the Unseelie Congress, while the Congress is presided over by her old enemy Ethan Shroud (back from *Vampriella #8* (first series), reprinted in the *Cult of Chaos* trade paperback). The circumstances of Vampirella's return and her first fierce foray against the night-roaming congressional wreckers are detailed in our first issue.

We're now into issue #2, and our cast expands to include Mordecai Pendragon, Vampirella's first friend on Earth. Pendragon, a former stage magician, has a serious drinking problem and a tragic past. After his first meeting with Vampirella ("Carnival of the Damned", *Vampirella #11* (first series), and likewise reprinted in the *Cult of Chaos* trade paperback), they teamed up for good and she posed as his magician's assistant in most of the rest of her original series. They travelled together, sharing adventures for man y, many issues. As of the beginning of this issue, however, Pendragon hadn't seen his supernormal friend for a decade. He's been reduced to selling magic charms from his covered wagon, and has no idea of the frightening changes that have been wrought by the events in issue #1. Now the mysteries deepen and the story adds a new, semisatirical dimension via the introduction of Bone.

Our creative staff should be familiar to everyone who purchased our first issue: Kurt Busiek, writer, Louis LaChance, penciller, John Nyberg, inker, and Michael Kaluta, cover artist are all back again. The lovely Vampirella drawing that graces our "quotations" page is by former Vampirella artist, Jose Gonzales. The only change we instituted since last issue's winning team was installing letterer Kevin Cunningham to assume the task of making all those funny little balloon markings. Kevin's work begins halfway through this issue. We're pleased to have him on board.

All here at Harris believe that we hit phantasmagorical paydirt with our next issue which features guest pencilling turns by Colleen Doran, James Fry, Carmine Infantino, Steve Leialoha, and—for the first time on the character she co-designed—Trina Robbins. If your think you know where the story's going—think again. If you think you've seen the last of certain characters who appear to have passed beyond our heroine's reach—think again. And if for a moment you believe that we are going to follow anything resembling a predictable path in charting the fates of Vampirella, Adam, Pendragon, Shroud and Chelsea—*think again*!

We should, by next issue, be able to feature some of your written responses to issue #1. Be back in 60 days for the penultimate issue of *Vampirella: Morning in America*.

Send all correspondence to:
VAMPIRELLA
C/O Harris Publications, Inc.
1115 Broadway, 8th Floor
New York, New York 10010

HARRIS
COMICS

All-New
VAMPIRELLA

Kurt Busiek
WRITER

Louis La Chance
PENCILLER–PAGES 1-30, 33-4, 36

John Nyberg
INKER–PAGES 1-30, 33-4, 36

Coleen Doran
PENCILLER–PAGE 31

Trina Robbins
ARTIST–PAGE 32

Steve Leialoha
ARTIST–PAGES 32-3
INKER–PAGES 38-9

Carmine Infantino
PENCILLER–PAGE 34
LAYOUT ARTIST–PAGES 37, 39-48

Kelley Jones
PENCILLER–PAGE 35

Stan Shaw
INKER–PAGE 35

James Fry
PENCILLER–PAGES 38-9

Richard Howell
INKER–PAGES 31, 33-4
EMBELLISHER–PAGES 37, 39-48
LETTERER–PAGES 31-5, 38-9

Kevin Cunningham
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CHAPTER NINE
WIDE and BROAD
THE GATE THE WAY
HE CAME AT HER WITH A GUN.
INHUMAN CREATURES HAVE BEEN CREEPING OUT OF THE SHADOWS FOR TEN YEARS--TO STEAL THE COUNTRY'S HEART, TO SPREAD CORRUPTION AND PAIN AND DEATH AND DAMNATION--
--AND HE EXPECTED A GUN TO SCARE HER.
VAMPIRELLA HAD TO SMILE AT THAT--
--IT'S SO REFRESHING TO ENCOUNTER EVIL ON SUCH A HUMAN SCALE.

BUT SHE CAN'T STOP--NOT FOR MORE THAN A SNACK.
SHE'S GOT TO KEEP LOOKING.
GOT TO FIND HER.
CAWBER? ADAM VAN HELSING HERE. I KNOW WE TALKED ONLY A FEW WEEKS AGO, BUT I'M HOPING YOU CAN HELP ME.
IT'S ABOUT THE UNSEELIE CONGRESS.
HE KNOWS WHAT CRANE WOULD SAY IF HE KNEW THE TRUTH.
ANY RECENT ACTIVITY IN PENNSYLVANIA?
SOME SIGN OF ORGANIZATION--A BASE, SOMETHING LIKE THAT??
HE'D SAY, "MY GOD, MAN--YOU'RE A UNITED STATES SENATOR! YOU CAN'T GO HARING OFF ON A MONSTER HUNT--IT'S NOT DIGNIFIED!"
BUT THERE ARE MORE IMPORTANT THINGS THAN DIGNITY.
YEAH, YEAH, I KNOW THEY STICK TO THE DISTRICT. BELIEVE ME, I KNOW.
IT'S JUST--THERE WAS A GIRL KIDNAPPED, AND THEY SENT A MESSAGE. IT POINTED UP YOUR WAY.
STILL ONLY LYCANTHROPES IN PENNSYLVANIA. NO ORGANIZATION BEYOND THE PACK--AND THE CHAINS OF NECROMANTIC POWER THAT BIND THEM TO THE UNSEELIE CONGRESS.
THANKS ANYWAY, MY BEST TO LILY.
THEY SENT A MESSAGE BEFORE THEY KILLED MY FATHER, TOO.
VALERIE GAVE IT TO ME AS SHE COUGHED UP BLOOD AND DIED. THEN A CRATE ARRIVED. DAD'S CORPSE.
THERE MUST BE A WAY TO BREAK THAT DAMNED RIDDLE. THERE MUST BE!
I am buried but not dead
I am beneath an address in Pennsylvania but not far from home
I am in death's power, guarded by a dead man
I am lonely; will you visit me?

BUT I'VE TRIED ALL OF MY CONTACTS IN PENNSYLVANIA--AND THERE'S NOTHING!
...AC HODAEL... SCHUL DERMODISS?
HOW ABOUT YOU, PENDRAGON? ANYTHING?
YOU CAN MAKE SENSE OUT OF THOSE BOOKS, CAN'T YOU?
MY DEAR BOY--
--MY DAYS IN THE TOP RANKS OF PRESTIDIGITATORS MAY BE LONG OVER--
--BUT I'VE HAD CAUSE TO LEARN MUCH ABOUT TRUE MAGIC THESE LAST YEARS.
TRUST ME--
--OR PERHAPS YOU'D LIKE TO LOOK FOR YOURSELF?
OF ALL THE UNMITIGATED--!
BAD ENOUGH THAT VAMPIRELLA'S SO DIFFERENT THESE DAYS--
--BUT WHY SHE STILL HANGS AROUND WITH A USELESS OLD--
NOW, SEE HERE--!
RINGGG
I FOUND IT, ADAM. I FOUND IT!
I NEED YOU AND PEN DOWN HERE RIGHT NOW.
AND ADAM--COME ARMED.

A SWORD, ADAM?
IT'S SILVER--TERRIFIC AGAINST THE UNDEAD. DAD SWORE BY IT.
OF COURSE, HE KEPT HIS IN A CANE...
GETTYSBURG IS IN PENNSYLVANIA--AND IT'S AN "ADDRESS." LINCOLN'S DEAD--BUT HE SITS WATCH HERE.
AND IT'S NOT FAR FROM THE SCHOOL THE GIRL WAS TAKEN FROM.
THIS COULD BE IT.
SO HOW DO WE GET IN?
ANY DOORWAYS--HIDDEN ROOMS?

I'VE BEEN CHECKING--BUT THERE'S NOTHING THAT WOULDN'T BE FREQUENTED BY PARK PERSONNEL OR THE PUBLIC.
RAP ON THE WALLS--SEE IF YOU CAN LOCATE A HOLLOW SPACE.
-MMFF!-
TAK TAK
VAMPIRELLA?

COME ON, GUYS... YOU DIDN'T THINK SHROUD WAS GOING TO MAKE IT...EASY, DID YOU?
IT WOULDN'T BE ANYWHERE A... HUMAN COULD REACH...
PENDRAGON AND ADAM BOTH FEEL AN INSTINCTIVE MALE URGE TO HELP--DESPITE KNOWING THE FULL EXTENT OF HER STRENGTH--

--BUT BEFORE THEY CAN MOVE--
-UHH!-
GGRRRRRRTCH

I KNEW IT-- A STAIR-WAY!
IT'S GETTING AWFULLY DARK.
DON'T THESE--THESE CREATURES- COME OUT AT NIGHT?
IT DOESN'T MATTER, PEN--
--IT'S ALWAYS NIGHT UNDER-GROUND.
UGH-- SHROUD MUST HAVE A SEPARATE ENTRANCE SOMEWHERE...
HERE, LET ME.
AS HE DESCENDS INTO DARK-NESS, ADAM VAN HELSING IS SURE OF ONE THING: THIS IS A TRAP.
ONLY AN IDIOT WOULD GIVE AN ENEMY DIRECTIONS-- HOWEVER OBSCURE-- WITH-OUT ARRANGING SOME SORT OF UNPLEASANT WELCOME.
AND ETHAN SHROUD IS NOT THE LEADER OF THE UNSEELIE CONGRESS BECAUSE HE'S AN IDIOT.
THIS IS A TRAP. AND ADAM VAN HELSING DOESN'T CARE.
SINCE HIS FATHER'S FUNERAL, HE'S ACHED TO DO SOMETHING-- ANYTHING-- TO REVENGE HIMSELF ON ETHAN SHROUD.
HE DOESN'T CARE WHAT IT COSTS. THIS IS HIS CHANCE.
HE WELCOMES IT.
OH!

THE CHAMBER STINKS OF EVIL.
NONE OF THEM COULD DESCRIBE THE SMELL, IF ASKED. THEY'D SAY WORDS LIKE "DECAY" AND "BLOOD" AND "FEAR"--AND IT WOULD NOT BE ENOUGH.
BUT THEY HAVE ALL SMELLED IT BEFORE, AND THEY RECOGNIZE IT FOR WHAT IT IS.
CHELSEA!
M-MISS NORMANDY!
YOU F-FOUND ME!
MISS NORMANDY?
I'LL EXPLAIN LATER.
DON'T WORRY, CHELSEA--YOU'RE SAFE NOW. WE'LL HAVE YOU FREE IN NO TIME.
B-BUT HE S-S-SAID YOU'D-- I S-SAW--
OH, MISS NORMANDY--LOOK OUT!
LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE GOT YOUR CHANCE TO USE THAT SWORD, ADAM--
--WHATEVER THESE THINGS ARE, THEY'RE DEFINITELY UNDEAD!
THE AUTOMATIC'S LOADED WITH SILVER BULLETS, PENDRAGON. YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE TOO MUCH TROUBLE.
DON'T CONCERN YOURSELF ABOUT ME--I'LL BE FINE.
HOW MANY SHOTS TO A CLIP?

SEVEN, BUT THERE'S ONLY ONE CLIP.
KBAM
KBAM
KBAM
WONDERFUL. AND THERE ARE DOZENS OF THESE THINGS!
HE FINDS HIMSELF CATALOGUING THEM--HIS MIND TAKING NOTES TO BE SET DOWN LATER IN HIS FATHER'S JOURNALS...
...HIS JOURNALS NOW.
AAAAAA
VULNERABLE TO SILVER--RELATIVELY SLOW-MOVING--BREATH STINGS LIKE AN ACID SPRAY.
BUT ALL THE WHILE, HIS BODY IS SCREAMING, "YES, YES, YES!"
HUUUUKK
THIS IS WHAT HE HAS BEEN WAITING FOR--WHAT HE HAS BEEN DREAMING OF! A CHANCE TO STRIKE BACK! TO DO SOMETHING!
TO GET A PIECE OF THE THINGS THAT KILLED HIS FATHER!
VAMPIRELLA HAS NO SUCH THOUGHTS OF REVENGE. THERE IS ONLY THE JOY OF BEING YOUNG AND STRONG ONCE MORE--
RHUHH
--THAT, AND THE CHANCE TO UNLEASH HER THIRST--!
BLEARGGH!
THESE THINGS TASTE AWFUL!
ADAM--TOSS ME ONE OF THOSE KNIVES, WILL YOU?

THANKS!
HEY, WATCH THE HANDS!
BMP
KSSSH
SKITTER SKITTER
KBAM
KBAM
CLK
NO MORE BULLETS-- WHAT NOW?
SHOULD HAVE BROUGHT A KNIFE-- BUT HE'LL BE DAMNED IF HE'S GOING TO ASK SENATOR RAMBO FOR ONE!
WAIT--WHY NOT MAGIC? HE CAN DO THAT--HE CAN!
NOW IF HE CAN ONLY REMEMBER THAT SPELL!
FIRST, BITE YOUR FINGER, DRAWING BLOOD--
THEN, SKETCH THE CHARACTER--
--AND--
BIP
TAKE THAT, MISTER SENATOR!

FROOOSH
HRAAAAA
OOPS.
IT WAS SUPPOSED TO TURN TO STONE. MUST HAVE DRAWN THE CHARACTER WRONG.

OH, WELL...

HE HAS JUST ABOUT DECIDED TO WRITE THEM UP UNDER THE NAME "SHADES"!!

...WHEN THE LAST OF THEM FALLS.

AND HE THINKS: IS THAT IT?
NICE TRICK WITH THE FIRE, PENY I DIDN'T KNOW THAT YOU COULD DO THAT!
THAT CAN'T BE ALL--CAN IT?

SURELY ETHAN SHROUD WOULD HAVE MORE PLANNED FOR THEM THAN A MEDIOCRE BUNCH OF SHAMBLING SHADOWS--
WHY THANK YOU, MY DEAR. I'M GLAD SOME PEOPLE APPRECIATE ME...
SURELY THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE--SOME SURPRISE--

BUT THERE ISN'T. EVEN THE KEY TO THE MANACLES ARE EASILY FOUND.
OH, MISS NORMANDY, I--
--OH, THANK YOU!
I KNOW YOU DON'T LIKE MY REAL NAME, CHELSEA, BUT I CAN'T HAVE YOU CALLING ME "MISS NORMANDY" ALL THE TIME.
IT MAKES ME FEEL LIKE I'M STILL AN OLD WOMAN.

WHY DON'T YOU CALL ME "ELLA"? IT'S AS GOOD A NICKNAME AS ANY.
UM...OKAY... ELLA...
GREAT. NOW LET ME INTRODUCE YOU TO MY FRIENDS--

--MORDECAI PENDRAGON--
MAGICIAN EXTRAORDINAIRE!
--AND THE HONORABLE ADAM VAN--
OH!

OHMI-GOD, IT'S LOOSE!
WHAT? WHAT'S LOOSE?

WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE RIGHT AWAY, OKAY?
CAN WE JUST GO NOW--RIGHT NOW?
WHAT IS IT? WHAT ARE YOU SO--

ADAM... ADAM...
HUH?
HE WAS TOO HASTY. THERE WAS A SURPRISE COMING.

THERE WAS ONE HELL OF A SURPRISE COMING.
ADAM... YOU MUST BEWARE...
OH MY DEAR LORD.
DAD!
YOU MUST BEWARE... BEWARE OF...
DAD!

HE HAD BEEN DEAD--AS DEAD AS A MAN CAN GET. HIS THROAT HAD BEEN CUT.
THEY ATTENDED HIS FUNERAL. THEY SAW HIM PUT INTO THE GROUND. HE WAS DEAD.
BUT THIS IS UNDENIABLY HIM. THIS IS CONRAD VAN HELSING.
AND HE IS ALIVE. BARELY SO, BUT ALIVE.

END CHAPTER NINE

THE WIND RATTLES THE PANELS LIKE SOMETHING TRYING TO GET IN, AND CHELSEA CANTRELL SHUDDERS.
MAYBE IF SHE JUST DOESN'T THINK ABOUT IT, NONE OF IT WILL HAVE HAPPENED.
MAYBE IF SHE JUST DOESN'T THINK ABOUT IT.
THIS HOUSE IS SO CREEPY!
ALL THIS STUFF-- IT'S--IT'S--
MORBID?
NOT REALLY DEAR CHILD. IT WAS CONRAD VAN HELSING'S--IT REPRESENTS A LIFETIME OF BATTLE WITH THE FORCES OF DARKNESS. BATTLE AND TRIUMPH, FOR THE MOST PART.
THAT'S THE OLD MAN UPSTAIRS, RIGHT? THIS IS HIS HOUSE?
NO, HIS SON'S. CONRAD'S NEVER BEEN HERE BEFORE, AS FAR AS I KNOW.
HIS SON'S HOUSE?
HE'S SO STILL...
GUESS HE THINKS A WHOLE LOT OF HIS DAD, HUH?
IF SHE JUST DOESN'T THINK ABOUT ANY OF IT.

CHAPTER TEN
NEW WINE
IN OLD BOTTLES
SO STILL...
ONLY ETHAN SHROUD COULD HAVE DONE THIS.
SHROUD IS THEIR ENEMY. SHROUD KILLED HIS FATHER--CUT HIS THROAT AND SHIPPED THE BODY TO HIM AS A FINAL INSULT.
BUT NOW SHROUD'S BROUGHT HIM BACK, TOO.
ADAM--?

I KNOW. YOU WANT TO GET BACK TO THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL--INVESTIGATE THOSE OTHER PASSAGEWAYS BEFORE SHROUD HAS TIME TO RELOCATE.
AND YOU'RE RIGHT--THAT'S WHAT WE SHOULD DO.
BUT THIS IS MY FATHER.

THERE ARE SOME OCCULTISTS I KNOW--THE BEST IN THE WORLD. I CAN HAVE THEM FLOWN IN--
FLOWN IN?
THAT MEANS TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS, AND SCHEDULES, AND WAITING. WAITING.

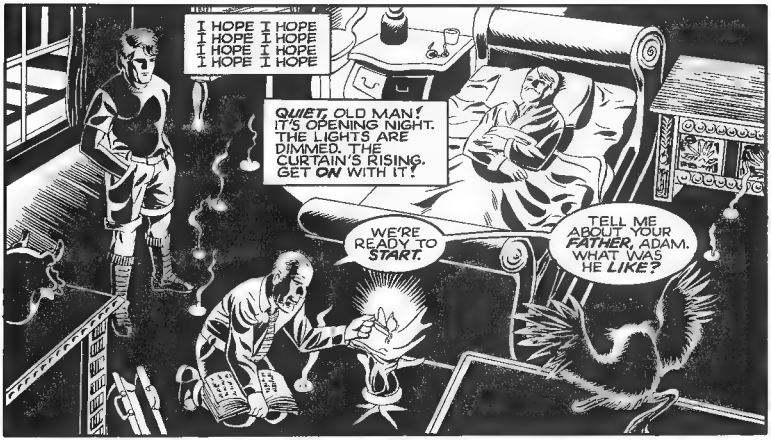
ADAM, WE DON'T HAVE TIME. AND WE DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW STRONGLY CONRAD IS BOUND TO SHROUD--OR IF HE IS AT ALL.
I'M GOING TO GET PENDRAGON.

--VAMPIRELLA? WELL, AH...HMM.
IT'S JUST WHAT SHE DOES. I THINK SOMETIMES IT'S WHAT SHE WAS CREATED TO DO.
AND YOU?

ME?
YEAH. WHY DO YOU DO THIS? WHAT DO YOU GET OUT OF IT?

HE THINKS ABOUT HIS WIFE. AND THE 'DEAR JOHN' LETTER HE GOT FROM HER SO LONG AGO.
AND HOW HE JUST TOOK IT.
AND WHAT IT DID TO HER--AND TO HIS DAUGHTER, GROWING UP WITH A SPINELESS, WORTHLESS, USELESS, ABSENT FATHER.

PEN! WE NEED YOU UP HERE! AND BRING YOUR BAG!
DUTY CALLS, MY DEAR. WE'LL TALK MORE LATER.
--SERIOUS, OKAY? THIS IS MY FATHER'S LIFE WE'RE TALKING ABOUT!
I KNOW HE'S YOUR FRIEND, BUT HE'S--
ADAM.
ONE OF THOSE WORDS HOVERS IN THE AIR. WHICH ONE? "USELESS?" "WORTHLESS?" "PATHETIC DRUNK," MAYBE?
I CAN DO THIS, ADAM. TRUST ME.
AND THE WIND--
AND THE WIND RATTLES THE PANES--
I'LL BE DOWNSTAIRS. I WANT TO SEE CHELSEA'S OKAY.
IS SHE LEAVING BECAUSE SHE DOESN'T WANT TO SEE ME FAIL? NO--SHE ALWAYS HAD FAITH IN ME.
SHE JUST DOESN'T LIKE THE SPELLS AND THE RITUALS--ALL THE SLOW STUFF. NEVER DID. SHE LIKES ACTION, NOT SUBTLETY.
LORD, I HOPE I CAN DO THIS.


I HOPE I HOPE
I HOPE I HOPE
I HOPE I HOPE
I HOPE I HOPE
QUIET, OLD MAN! IT'S OPENING NIGHT. THE LIGHTS ARE DIMMED. THE CURTAIN'S RISING. GET ON WITH IT!
WE'RE READY TO START.
TELL ME ABOUT YOUR FATHER, ADAM. WHAT WAS HE LIKE?

HUH? UH, WELL--HE WAS A TEACHER, A COLLEGE PROFESSOR--
--HE WROTE SEVEN, NO EIGHT BOOKS--
NO, NOT THAT WAY-- YOU'RE DESCRIBING HIM LIKE A STRANGER. I EMOTIONS, NOT STATISTICS.

UH...

DAMMIT, HE WAS LIKE A STRANGER! HE ALWAYS LOVED THINGS MORE THAN MOTHER AND ME!
I COULDN'T TALK TO HIM ABOUT OTHER KIDS, ABOUT SCHOOL. BUT BRING HIM A THING-- EVEN JUST A BROKEN OLD ARROWHEAD FROM THE BACK-YARD--

--AND HE'D TELL THE MOST WONDERFUL STORIES, ABOUT WHERE IT CAME FROM, WHO MADE IT, WHAT THEY BELIEVED...
I'D SPEND HOURS LOOKING FOR STRANGE THINGS, JUST SO HE'D TELL ME ABOUT THEM.
THE WALLS-- WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE WALLS--

THERE WAS THIS ONE PROCURY FETISH HE HAD-- I CAN'T REMEMBER A TIME IT WASN'T ON HIS DESK.
HE'D SIT AND HOLD IT FOR HOURS, TURNING IT OVER IN HIS HANDS, RUNNING HIS FINGERS ACROSS THE RIDGES ON ITS BACK...
WE DID IT--WE ACTUALLY DID IT. WE'RE HERE.
THEN WHERE'S--?
DANGER... THERE IS GREAT DANGER... DO NOT TRUST...
GREAT DANGER...
DAD!
DAD, IT'S ME! IT'S ADAM!
DANGER... YOU MUSTN'T TRUST...
MUSTN'T TRUST? MUSTN'T TRUST WHOM?
RRRRRRR
KRAKABOOM
OH!
IT'S ONLY LIGHTNING, CHELSEA.
RELAX-- WE'LL TAKE YOU HOME TO YOUR PARENTS IN A FEW DAYS. YOU'LL BE SAFE THERE.
ELLA? THIS IS A WAR, ISN'T IT?
I SUPPOSE YOU COULD CALL IT THAT, YES. WHY?
THEN THERE'S NOWHERE SAFE. NOWHERE AT ALL...

YOUR FATHER IS MY CREATURE NOW, ADAM VAN HELSING. HIS SOUL IS MY PLAYGROUND. YOU CANNOT PREVAIL AGAINST ME HERE.
SHROUD-- THAT'S SHROUD'S VOICE!
I'M NOT--I THINK--
YOU DON'T HAVE A CLUE WHAT YOU'RE DOING, DO YOU?
--YOU'LL EVEN HAVE YOUR FATHER BACK. WHAT SAY YOU?
YOUR FATHER-- ALIVE UNBOUND, FREE.
HE'S IN THERE-- CONRAD IS IN THERE. I BUILT THE SPELLS CORRECTLY-- I KNOW I DID!
WHAT HAPPENED, PENDRAGON-- WHAT'S GOING ON?
YOU KNOW WHAT I WANT, VAN HELSING. I WANT VAMPIRELLA. AGREE TO DELIVER HER TO ME AND YOU'LL LIVE--
WE HAVE TO REACH HIM!
BEGONE! BEGONE! FOUL DEMON--I CAST YOU OUT! YARVA AC MODAEL... LIM... ECC DEMMO--
OH, WHY DID I LET VAMPIRELLA LEAVE?
AH, THE ALCOHOLIC.
YOU'RE VERY TOLERANT, VAN HELSING.
I'M NOT.
KRAKABOOM

I DON'T EVEN NEED TO CAPTURE YOUR SOUL, ALCOHOLIC, I'VE NO USE FOR IT.
I'LL JUST DEVOUR IT, I THINK.
FOR GOD'S SAKE, ADAM--TALK TO HIM! YOUR FATHER'S IN THERE SOMEWHERE!
DAD!
DAD, NO!
I WON'T ACCEPT THIS! YOU'RE NOT SHROUD--YOU'RE MY FATHER!
AD--
HRH
ADAM?
WHY DOESN'T IT RAIN?
DAD?
CAST YOU OUT, DEMON, I CAST YOU OUT
FIGHT HIM, DAD--YOU CAN DO IT! YOU'RE STRONGER THAN HE IS!
IT BLOWS AND IT BLOWS AND IT THUNDERS AND IT LIGHTNINGS, BUT THERE'S STILL NO RAIN.
WHAT IS IT WAITING FOR?
CURSE YOU, ETHAN SHROUD! I FOUGHT YOU AND YOUR KIND ALL MY LIFE! I WAS YOUR PRISONER FOR TEN YEARS AND STILL I FOUGHT YOU!
YOU COULDN'T BREAK ME WHILE I LIVED AND YOU WON'T BREAK ME NOW!
DO YOU HEAR ME?

CHELSEA WAS SUCH AN ENERGETIC GIRL, VAMPIRELLA REMEMBERS. ALWAYS LAUGHING, JOKING -- ALWAYS IN ONE SCRAPE OR ANOTHER.
IS SOMETHING OUT THERE?
NOT LIKE THIS.
NOT JUST OUT THERE...
I DID THIS TO HER, SHE THINKS. I MADE HER QUIET AND SCARED.
AND IT'S UP TO ME TO SEE THAT SHE COMES THROUGH THIS OKAY.
IT'S GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT, CHELSEA.
NO... NO IT ISN'T..
BUT HOW? I'M A HUNTER -- I'VE NEVER KNOWN HOW TO BE ANYTHING ELSE.
DON'T YOU SEE, ELLA? DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT'S HAPPENING?!
IF I DON'T, THEN TELL ME. WHAT IS IT, CHELSEA?
I--I--
IT'S NOTHING.
NOTHING.

DAD? DAD, ARE YOU--
I'M IN CONTROL. I'M MYSELF.
BUT I CANNOT SAY FOR HOW LONG.
THIS WAS A DANGEROUS ATTEMPT. YOU SHOULD NOT HAVE RISKED IT.
I COULDN'T JUST LET--
BE AWARE THAT ETHAN SHROUD DID NOT RESURRECT ME TO DO YOU ANY FAVORS, BOY. HIS SPELLS ANIMATE ME.
I AM HIS.
IMPRISON ME--OR WATCH ME AT ALL TIMES. TREAT ME LIKE AN ENEMY.
REMEMBER THE PLUM IN THE PATH.
DAD--
YOU MUST DEFEAT HIM, ADAM. THE WORLD IS DEPENDING ON YOU TO--
DAD--WILL YOU JUST SHUT UP ABOUT ETHAN SHROUD FOR A MINUTE?
THERE'S SO MUCH I WANT TO SAY TO YOU, DAD. I--
I'VE BEEN LOST WITHOUT YOU. I NEVER KNOW WHAT TO--
I WISH EVERY DAY THAT--
I--
I HAVEN'T BEEN MUCH OF A SON.
I'M SORRY.

DON'T BE RIDICULOUS, BOY. I MAY HAVE BEEN A PRISONER, BUT I'M PSYCHIC, REMEMBER?
I KNOW WHAT YOU'VE ACCOMPLISHED-- THE NETWORK YOU'VE BUILT, THE HEIGHTS YOU'VE REACHED.
I'M PROUD OF YOU, SON.
I LOVE YOU.
DAD, I--
HKK
NOBODY COULD HAVE DONE BETTER.
DAD!
SOMETHING'S HAPPENING TO HIS BODY! GET US OUT OF HERE, PENDRAGON-- NOW!!
HKKKK
HKK
HE'S CHOKING! THERE'S SOMETHING-- SOMETHING STUCK--

FOR A MOMENT, HE WANTS TO ROUND ON PENDRAGON-- TO GRAB HIM BY THE NECK AND PUSH HIS STUPID FACE THROUGH THE WALL.
YOU ALMOST KILLED MY FATHER, HE WANTS TO SHOUT.
YOU-- YOU--

DON'T TROUBLE YOURSELF, PENDRAGON-- IT WASN'T YOUR FAULT, AND IT'S OVER. HE'S BREATHING JUST FINE NOW.
NOW IF YOU DON'T MIND, I'D LIKE TO BE ALONE...
OF COURSE.

HE WATCHES HIS FATHER'S SLOW, STEADY BREATHING, HIS MIND FULL OF DANGERS AND WARNINGS AND DREAD.
DAD, I-- I LOVE YOU TOO.
AND THE WIND RATTLES THE PANES LIKE SOMETHING TRYING TO GET IN.

END CHAPTER TEN

THE FROG WAS A NICE TOUCH, HE THOUGHT.
THE ETHEREA, BOUGE.
ELEGANT. CLASSIC.
HERE, MASTER.
THOSE ARE FANTASQUES, BOUGE. BRING THE ETHEREA. THE BRASS COFFER. NOW!
Y-YES, MASTER.
HERE, MASTER.
HMPH.
HE REALLY IS A SIMPLETON, SHROUD THINKS. NOT LIKE TOOMEY AT ALL.
IS THIS THE BEST THE UNSEELIE CONGRESS CAN FIND ME--OR ARE THEY ATTEMPTING TO REGISTER A PROTEST? EVEN WITH TRAINING, HE'LL NEVER BE MUCH.
AH WELL. NO MATTER. IT'S NOT IMPORTANT.
THE SEEDS ARE PLANTED.
THE STAGE IS SET.
THE STORM RAGES AGAINST ITS BONDS.

IT'S ALMOST TIME.
CHAPTER ELEVEN
INTO THE WILDERNESS

HE CANNOT SEE INTO THE HOUSE, BUT THEY ARE SO PREDICTABLE...
MORE TEA, CHELSEA?
THANKS.
LOOK, I WANT TO THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR FORBEARANCE. I KNOW I'VE SLOWED THINGS UP, PUTTING MY FATHER'S RETURN AHEAD OF EVERYTHING--
AND I WANT YOU TO KNOW I APPRECIATE YOUR LETTING ME.
THEY WOULD HAVE MADE THEIR PLANS...
WE'LL GO BACK TO THE MEMORIAL AT FIRST LIGHT TOMORROW. IF THERE'S ANY TRACE OF SHROUD'S PRESENCE, WE'LL FIND IT.
IF THEY'VE CLEARED OUT, THEY'VE HAD TIME TO DO SO BY NOW, AND I'VE ALREADY APOLOGIZED FOR THAT.
ADOPTED THEIR SECURITY MEASURES...
IN THE MEANTIME, MY FATHER'S WARNED US THAT HE'S STILL UNDER SHROUD'S CONTROL. HE'LL HAVE TO BE WATCHED.
I'LL TAKE THE FIRST SHIFT-- VAMPIRELLA, THE SECOND, PENDRAGON-- IF EITHER OF US HAS ANY PROBLEM, WE'LL CALL ON YOU.
...AND TODDLED OFF TO BED.
THAT'S THAT, THEN. PLEASANT DREAMS, EVERYONE.
EVEN WARNED, THEY WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THE OLD MAN HARMLESS...
...NEEDING NOTHING MORE THAN A WARDER.
THEY WOULD NOT SUSPECT...
AND THEY WOULD NOT NOTICE...
HSSSSSS SSSSSSS

UNTIL IT WAS TOO LATE.
DAD!
THE BREATH OF SOMNUS WOULD TAKE WHOMEVER WAS NEAREST...
GOT TO GET THE 6TH.
WUMP
AND AS FOR THE REST...
AS FOR THE REST...

...THEY WOULD BE ASLEEP.
COME IN, MY LORDS, COME IN.
COME IN-- COME IN-- I ASK YOU IN!
COME IN-- COME IN-- I CALL YOU IN!
COME IN-- COME IN-- I BRING YOU IN!
COME IN, MY LORDS-- COME IN! I WELCOME YOU IN!

THE SCHOLAR MACROBIUS IDENTIFIED FIVE KINDS OF DREAM: THE FIGURATIVE DREAM, THE VISION, THE OCULAR DREAM, THE INSOMNIUM AND THE PHANTASM.
AND THE CREATURES OF DREAM ARE INFINITE -- THE FANTASQUES, THE NIGHTMARES AND THE ETHEREA ARE ONLY THE BEST KNOWN OF THEM.
THESE CREATURES ARE NOT EASY TO CONTROL -- THE FANTASQUES IS TOO CONCERNED WITH ITS OWN INNER DELIGHT, AND THE NIGHTMARE IS TOO HUNGRY.
THAT LEAVES THE ETHEREA.
BUT SHOULD YOU CHOOSE TO COMMAND THE ETHEREA, BE WARNED -- IT REQUIRES A SUBTLE TOUCH.
THE ETHEREA CAN BE INDUCED TO NUDGE DREAMS TOWARD THE ENDS YOU CHOOSE, BUT THEY WILL ALWAYS USE THE TRUTH TO DO SO.
THE TRUTH AS TOLD BY THE ETHEREA IS OFTEN ENIGMATIC AND HARD TO INTERPRET, AND THEREIN LIES ITS POWER--
--BUT IT WILL ALWAYS BE THE TRUTH.

VAMPIRELLA DREAMS.
IN HER DREAM, SHE IS HOME AGAIN, HOME ON DRAKULON--A WORLD LIGHT-YEARS AWAY FROM EARTH--A WORLD THAT ORBITS TWIN SUNS--
--A WORLD WHERE LIFE-GIVING BLOOD FLOWS IN THE RIVERS AND STREAMS.
--AS PLENTIFUL AS WATER ON EARTH--
IT'S SO GOOD TO BE HOME.
I HOPE IT WON'T RAIN, DON'T YOU?
TRISTAN!
I HATE IT WHEN IT RAINS. IT'S GUMMY, AND IT'S EVERYWHERE--
--AND THE STENCH IS JUST... EUUAUGH!
AND THEN THERE'S THE BEACH! DON'T GET ME STARTED ON THE BEACH!
TRISTAN--MY LOVE--WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
TRISTAN. HER FRIEND. HER LOVER. IN EARTH TERMS, HER HUSBAND. SHE HAS DREAMED OF HIM OFTEN.
BUT NEVER LIKE THIS BEFORE
ALL THIS STUFF--THE BLOOD, THE ADVANCED SOCIETY, THE LOW-BUDGET SCENERY--
DID YOU GET HIT ON THE HEAD OR SOMETHING?
YOU DON'T--NO!
THIS IS REAL! IT HAPPENED! I DIDN'T--HALLUCINATE IT!
COME NOW! ARE YOU SAYING THAT BECAUSE YOU TRULY BELIEVE IT--
--OR BECAUSE IF IT'S NOT TRUE, SOMETHING ELSE MIGHT BE--SOMETHING THAT YOU DON'T WANT TO ADMIT...
OH!
VAMPIRELLA CRIES OUT IN HER SLEEP--TURNS OVER--

--AND THE DREAM BEGINS AGAIN.
THE MEN HAVE COME. THE MEN FROM EARTH IN THEIR SILVER SHIP.
AND SHE IS DISCOVERING THAT WITHIN THEIR VEINS FLOWS THE LIFE-GIVING FLUID THAT HAD BEEN RECENTLY LOST TO DRAKULON.
THIS IS HOW IT HAPPENED, ISN'T IT?
YEP! THIS IS JUST HOW IT HAPPENED! TRUST ME -- I WAS THERE!
IT HAD TO HAVE HAPPENED THIS WAY, RIGHT? I MEAN, IF YOU WEREN'T FROM A PLANET OF VAMPIRES -- IF IT WEREN'T PERFECTLY NATURAL FOR YOU TO DRINK BLOOD--
--WHY, THEN, YOU MIGHT BE SOMETHING EVIL, RIGHT?
AND YOU'RE NOT EVIL, ARE YOU? YOU FIGHT EVIL. YOU FIGHT EVIL WITHOUT THINKING ABOUT IT...
ADAM VAN HELSING TALKS WITH HIS FATHER...
Uh, DAD-- ARE YOU OKAY?
DO I LOOK OKAY?
OF COURSE I'M NOT OKAY, YOU WHINY LITTLE NOTHING! GET ME DOWN FROM HERE!
DON'T CALL ME THAT, DAD-- I'LL GET YOU--
I CAN'T! THE NAILS ARE TOO FAR IN!
THEN FIND ANOTHER WAY! MOVE, BOY! YOU'LL SAVE ME IF YOU'RE WORTH ANYTHING AT ALL!

SHROUD SAID HE'D LET YOU GO IF I GAVE HIM VAMPIRELLA-- BUT--
BUT WHAT? DO IT. ALREADY!
FOR CHRIST'S SAKE! SHE'S GOT THE TEETH, SHE DRINKS BLOOD, SHE TURNS INTO A BAT.! WHAT DO YOU NEED, A ROAD MAP?
SHE'S ONE OF THEM! LET HER GO TO THEM-- SHE'LL BE HAPPY WITH THEM, I PROMISE! JUST GET ME DOWN!
I CAN'T, DAD--I JUST--
AD-DAM...
.. I WON'T LOVE YOU UNLESS YOU GET ME DOWN!
DAD--!
... DAD...
NO!
CHELSEA CANTRELL RUNS.

NO! STAY BACK!
SHE WAS ALWAYS THE TOP GIRL IN SCHOOL. THE LEADER. THE COOL ONE. ALL THE OTHERS LOOKED UP TO HER.
BUT IT WAS JUST A POSE, SHE WANTS TO SHOUT. IT WAS JUST A POSE!
THOOM!
INSIDE, I WAS JUST THE SAME AS THEY WERE! I'M JUST A LITTLE GIRL. IT DIDN'T MEAN ANYTHING!
OH, BUT IT DID, CHELSEA.
YOU WANTED POWER, CHELSEA--AND YOU REACHED OUT AND TOUCHED IT.
THOOM
YOU STILL WANT POWER. YOU STILL WANT TO BE TOP GIRL.
YOU WANT TO BE THE TOP GIRL FOREVER--AND I WANT TO HELP YOU.
LET ME GIVE YOU THE POWER, CHELSEA!
IT'LL BE WONDERFUL, CHELSEA. YOU'LL LOVE IT--ONCE YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE.
NO, SHE WANTS TO SCREAM!
I'M JUST A KID--A LITTLE GIRL!
BUT SHE STUMBLES, AND SHE KNOWS IT'LL REACH HER BEFORE SHE CAN GET UP--
NO
PLEASE...
NOT YET MAYBE NOT EVER.

MORDECAI PENDRAGON VISITS WITH HIS FAMILY.
HI, DADDY!
YOU SHOULD SEE THE GUY I JUST KILLED-- LOOKED A LOT LIKE YOU.
SARA?
SAY 'HI' TO YOUR GRANDPA NOW, PATRICK!
POW! POW POW POW!
ISN'T HE CUTE? YOU SHOULD SEE HIM WITH HIS LITTLE GAROTTE!
I NEVER TOLD YOU ABOUT MY PROM, DID I, DADDY? RICHIE PICKED ME UP IN THE BIGGEST, FANCIEST LIMO--!
OF COURSE, THERE WAS A BODY IN THE TRUNK, BUT YOU CAN'T HAVE EVERYTHING, CAN YOU?
PEN...
ROSIE?
PEN-DRAGON, WHY WEREN'T YOU HERE? IF YOU LOVED ME--
--LOVED US-- YOU WOULD HAVE KNOWN WE NEEDED YOU.
WHY DID YOU MAKE US TURN TO--TO THOSE PEOPLE FOR HELP?
WHY DID YOU LET THEM MAKE SARA ONE OF THEM?
HE WANTS TO SAY HE'S SORRY, BUT THERE'S A FROG IN HIS THROAT.
R'G'MP! WHY DO YOU EVEN TRY, PENDRAGON?
WHY DO YOU EVER TRY? YOU DESTROYED YOUR FAMILY. YOU'RE A DANGER TO YOUR FRIENDS.
THE FROG IS RIGHT. HE CAN FEEL IT IN HIS HEART
HE CAN FEEL IT, HOT AND SHARP, LIKE A FIERY KNIFE--
BURNING WITHIN HIM--
--TRYING TO GET OUT--
UH-OH!
IT HURTS-- IT--
K.JONES/S.SHAW

--UHH!
NOT HIS HEART AT ALL. THE AMULET OF GWYNEDD.
IT WOULD PROTECT A MAN FROM CREATURES THAT PREY ON HIS DREAMS, THE STORIES SAID. HE HAD IT FOR YEARS, HAD TAKEN TO WEARING IT AT NIGHT, JUST IN CASE IT WORKED.
BUT IT HAD NEVER--
OH.
MORDECAI PENDRAGON THINKS ABOUT HIS FRIENDS, IN THE OTHER ROOMS-- IN THE OTHER BEDS--
OH, MY GOODNESS.
--AND HE SUDDENLY FEELS VERY ALONE.
END CHAPTER ELEVEN

VAMPIRELLA DREAMS OF DRAKULON, AND DREAMS, AND DREAMS.
EACH OF THE DREAMS IS DIFFERENT, AND EACH, SHE KNOWS, IS TRUE.
IN ONE OF THE DREAMS, ALL THE DRAKULONIANS HAVE WINGS...
(I REMEMBER--MY WINGS WERE AMPUTATED! BUT--WHY DON'T I REMEMBER TRISTAN HAVING WINGS?)
IN ANOTHER, TRISTAN TURNS AGAINST HER, BECOMES A MONSTER--AND SHE FLEES TO EARTH TO ESCAPE HIS WRATH!.
(NO--TRISTAN LOVES ME STILL! HE LOVES ME! I'M SURE OF IT!)
IN STILL ANOTHER, HER PEOPLE BATTLE FOR POSSESSION OF THE PLANET WITH A STRANGE RACE OF PANTHER-PEOPLE...
(I KNEW A PANTHER-GIRL--OR DID I? OR WAS THAT ON EARTH?)
IN ALL OF THEM, THE SHIP FROM EARTH ARRIVES, BUT ALWAYS A DIFFERENT SHIP, ALWAYS DIFFERENT MEN...
(BUT--THERE WAS ONLY ONE SHIP--)
U.S.S. ARTHUR C. CLARKE
THERE IS EVEN ONE IN WHICH IT IS DRACULA WHO DISCOVERS THAT THE PLANET IS DOOMED..
THIS IS NO FANTASY--NO CHILD'S IMAGINING!
BE REASONABLE, CITIZEN!
(BUT-)
DREAM AFTER DREAM, MEMORY AFTER MEMORY. SOME OF THEM ARE DISTURBING--SOME OF THEM CONFUSING--
--AND SOME OF THEM--
DING DONG

--SOME OF THEM ARE APPALLING!
YOUR MORNING BLOOD DELIVERY, MA'AM!
AW, MA! Y'GOT ALL O-POSITIVE AGAIN! WHY CAN'T WE HAVE Rh-NEGATIVE THIS TIME?
O-POSITIVE IS GOOD FOR YOU HEMO-BOBBY. IT HELPS BUILD STRONG FANGS!
VAMPIRELLA, BE A DEAR AND GET YOUR SISTERS TO SETTLE DOWN, WILL YOU?
YOU DID TOO BORROW MY EARRINGS, VAMPIRETTA! YOU WORE THEM TO THE MALL TO TRY AND IMPRESS THAT VLAD!
DUSK
DID NOT! DID NOT!! DRAKULINA IS A BIG FAT LIAR!
DAILY FANG
THEY'RE HERE!!
U.S.S. CLIVE BARKER LANDS IN PLASMA CITY
ONE LUCKY DRAKULONIAN TO WIN DREAM TRIP TO EARTH
SALT
PEPR
THIS CAN'T BE REAL! I CAN'T BE SEEING THIS!
CHAPTER TWELVE:
"Sheep's CLOTHING"

IT'S NOT REAL, VAMPIRELLA -- YOU'RE DREAMING!
WAKE UP!
OH, LOOK-- A HUMAN! AND RIGHT AT BREAKFAST TIME!
PEN?

COME ON, EVERYBODY --DIG IN! IT'S BEST WHEN IT'S FRESH, YOU KNOW!
WOW!
NEAT!
WAKE UP, VAMPIRELLA IF I DIE IN YOUR DREAM, I DIE FOR REAL!
BUT I--

BREAKFAST! BREAKFAST! PIG-PILE ON THE HUMAN!
PLEASE, VAMPIRELLA! WAKE UP! WAKE--
BUT--

--UP!
P-PENDRAGON?
OH, THANK HEAVEN! NOW I KNOW HOW KIPPERS FEEL!

I MUST ADMIT:- THAT'S NOT HOW I'D PICTURED DRAKULON FROM YOUR DESCRIPTIONS...
NO... BUT EVEN NOW... IT SEEMS SO REAL...
WHAT'S GOING ON, PENDRAGON?

SOME SORT OF DREAM-DEMONS, I GATHER. NASTY, AREN'T THEY?
BRR! I CAN STILL FEEL THAT LOUD CHILD'S FINGERS AT MY THROAT, YOU'RE SURE HE DOESN'T EXIST?
I'M... I'M NOT SURE OF ANYTHING ANY MORE...

THINGS ARE GOING AWRY.
WE MUST LAUNCH THE CONTINGENCY PLANS.
CONTINGENCY PLANS, MASTER?
THE SILVER COFFER--AND THAT PACKAGE, THE BROWN PAPER ONE WRAPPED IN TWINE.
BRING THEM TO ME--
ADAM--!
IS HE HURT?
JUST ASLEEP. MAYBE A BRUISE OR TWO.
NOW, I'M GOING TO HAVE TO ENTER HIS DREAM TO WAKE HIM, SO BE PREPARED...
OOOOOH, I HATE THIS!
PREPARED? PREPARED FOR WHAT?
HE'S CHANGED TOO, SHE THINKS.
SO MUCH HAS CHANGED SINCE SHE WAS...GONE.
PENDRAGON'S CHANGED... SHE DOESN'T EVEN KNOW IF HE'S THE SAME PERSON ANYMORE. SHE DOESN'T KNOW IF SHE IS.

AK!!

ENJOY THE SHOW?
DON'T EVER CHANGE, PEN--
UHH... WHAT?

--YOU MIGHT GET WORSE.
HOW NICE OF YOU TO ADMIT THAT I COULD, DEAR GIRL!
I--I DREAMED--
--DAD!!!

IT'S OKAY-- HE'S STILL SLEEPING. THANK GOD...
HOW ODD--I HAD ASSUMED THAT CONRAD WAS THE TRIGGER...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
I'VE LOOKED AROUND-- THIS HOUSE HAS AN ASTONISHING COLLECTION OF WARDS AGAINST THE SUPERNATURAL.
SOMEBODY LET THOSE DREAM-DEMONS IN--

AND I DOUBT IT WAS ONE OF US WHO OPENED THOSE DOORS--!

SHE RUNS AND SHE RUNS, AND SHE TURNS A CORNER. AND SHE HEARS NOTHING BEHIND HER.
FOR A MOMENT, CHELSEA CANTRELL THINKS SHE'S ESCAPED.
BUT THEN HE'S IN FRONT OF HER. ETHAN SHROUD. NORMAL-SIZED THIS TIME.
AND HE'S HOLDING OUT A PACKAGE TO HER, AND HE SAYS, "TAKE IT, CHILD, TAKE IT"--
AND SHE DOESN'T WANT TO--
--BUT SHE TAKES IT.
WE'D BETTER CHECK ON CHELSEA.
YOU KEEP AN EYE ON CONRAD, ADAM--I DON'T THINK IT WOULD BE WISE TO LEAVE HIM UNATTENDED.
COME ON, PEN.
SHE TRIES TO IGNORE THE HOLLOW, COLD FEELING IN HER GUT--
--BUT IT WON'T GO AWAY. THOSE WEREN'T JUST DREAMS, IT SAYS. THEY MEANT SOMETHING.
YOUR MEMORIES DON'T ADD UP-- THEY DON'T MAKE SENSE. SOME OF THEM MUST BE FALSE.
SOME OF THEM--

--MAYBE ALL OF THEM.
VAMPIRELLA! PENDRAGON! COME BACK-- NOW!!
THERE--I-- I CALLED THEM.
NOW WILL YOU PUT THAT--
ADAM, WHAT--
DON'T JUST STAND THERE, GIRL--
--COME IN COME IN!
DAD--!
OR WOULD YOU RATHER I GUT MY ONLY HEIR HERE LIKE FRESH BROOK TROUT?
AGAINST THAT WALL--- BOTH OF YOU!
AND NOW--
--WHICH OF YOU SHALL I KILL FIRST?

HOW ABOUT YOU? YOU ABANDONED ME--LEFT ME TO ROT IN ETHAN SHROUD'S DUNGEON!
I'M SORRY FOR THAT, CONRAD--BUT YOU'RE BLAMING THE WRONG PERSON FOR YOUR INCARCERATION.

AND WHOM SHOULD I BLAME? THE MAN WHO RAISED ME FROM THE DEAD? THE MAN WHO BROUGHT ME BACK AFTER MY OWN SON BURIED ME?
THE MAN WHO KILLED YOU IN THE FIRST PLACE?
IMPERTINENT LITTLE MISSY! FOR THAT YOU GET PUNISHED!

IH!

AH-AH! NO HANDS, NO HANDS!
LET IT BLEED! MORE OF A LESSON THAT WAY!
HE'S FIGHTING IT, ADAM!

IF SHROUD WAS FULLY IN CONTROL, WE'D ALL BE DEAD BY NOW--ALL BUT VAMPIRELLA, ANYWAY!
BUT HE'S RESISTING HE DOESN'T WANT TO HURT US! THAT MEANS YOU'VE GOT A CHANCE TO STOP HIM!

ME?
YOU'RE THE ONE HE FEELS MOST STRONGLY TOWARD! YOU'RE THE ONE HE'LL MOST RESIST ATTACKING!
YOU CAN STOP HIM, ADAM--YOU CAN!

YOU MEAN--ATTACK MY OWN FATHER? BUT--
TSK-TSK! NO TALKING IN MY CLASSES, BOYS!
FOMENTING TROUBLE, EH? NO PRINCIPAL IN THIS SCHOOL BOY--I TAKE CARE OF PUNISHMENTS MYSELF!
SO WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO SAY IN YOUR DEFENSE? EH? EH?
I--I--
DON'T STUTTER, BOY!
DAMMIT, ADAM--DO SOMETHING!
YOU REACHED HIM BEFORE--IN THIS VERY ROOM! DO IT AGAIN!
I-UH--
SOMETHING TO SAY, BOY? SPIT IT OUT--DON'T BE SHY!
DAD--UH--
--FATHER--UH--
--SIR--
THAT SPEAR--UH--IT'S VERY INTERESTING.
WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?
OH, GOD. THAT'S IT--WE'RE ALL DEAD.
THIS SPEAR?

WELL, TECHNICALLY IT'S NOT A SPEAR-- A SPEAR HAS A METAL HEAD, USUALLY OF IRON OR STEEL...
THE WEAPON IS CARVED ENTIRELY FROM EBONWOOD, A RARE WOOD FOUND ONLY IN THE FORESTS OF CENTRAL AFRICA...
THE INDIGENOUS TRIBESMEN...THEY PAINT IT WITH BLOOD AND FIRE-HARDEN...
...GIVES IT... A STRENGTH APPROACHING THAT OF BRONZE...
THE RUNES MUST BE CARVED BEFORE...
...BEFORE...
WHY IS IT SO HARD TO REMEMBER?
WHY CAN'T HE SEE--
--SEE THROUGH THIS HAZE OF BLOOD AND--
--KILL THEM, KILL THEM--
THE SPEAR-- FOCUS ON THE SPEAR--
...THE RUNES...
DAD...
PERHAPS YOU'D LIKE TO TELL US ABOUT THIS INSTEAD?

MY SON...
MY SON...MY FRIENDS...
...CAN YOU EVER FORGIVE ME?
DAD...
I'VE GOT TO SAY, PROFESSOR--I'D HATE TO HAVE BEEN ONE OF YOUR STUDENTS--!
THAT'S WHEN IT HAPPENS--ALMOST TOO FAST FOR ANYONE TO SEE--
WHAT--?!
HKKK--
DAD!

--AND FAR TOO FAST FOR ANYONE TO STOP--
WHO--
NO--
WHY DIDN'T ANYBODY LISTEN?!?
CHELSEA!
I TRIED TO WARN YOU! I TRIED TO WARN YOU! WHY DIDN'T YOU LISTEN TO ME?!
YOU SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO ME!
SSSH
A MURDER, A TRANSFORMATION, AN ESCAPE--ALL WITHIN SECONDS. CHELSEA'S GONE--AND CONRAD...
...AND AS CONRAD VAN HELSING DIES FOR THE SECOND TIME, HIS SON REMEMBERS A TALE HE ONCE HEARD, LONG AGO:
ONE DAY, A MAN OUT WALKING SAW A RIPE PLUM IN THE PATH BEFORE HIM. HIS MOUTH WATERED AT THE SIGHT, AND HE REACHED DOWN TO PICK IT UP.
BUT A SCORPION WAS HIDING UNDER THE PLUM. IT LEAPT OUT AND STUNG THE MAN'S HAND, AND THE MAN DIED.
THERE WAS MUCH WAILING AND SADNESS IN THE VILLAGE, BUT DEAD WAS DEAD, AND ALL BECAUSE THE MAN SAW THE PLUM, BUT FAILED TO SEE THE SCORPION.
END CHAPTER TWELVE—CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE

ON LITTLE BAT WINGS...

WELCOME TO VAMPIRELLA: Morning in America *#3. With this issue, we begin our countdown to next issue's climactic events.*

Truly sharp-eyed readers will notice that Chapter Four looks different from the rest of the issue. That's because master stylist Carmine Infantino *and usually-available editor* Richard Howell *stepped in to finish up this issue, allowing regular penciller* Louis LaChance *enough time off to get married, have a honeymoon, etc. etc. Best wishes to Louis and his new bride—but hey, don't try this excuse again, guy, okay?*

Those same sharp-eyed readers will doubtless also notice that some of Chapter Three's pages are the work of a selection of guest artists. Kelley Jones, James Fry, Steve Leialoha, Colleen Doran, Stan Shaw *and* Carmine Infantino *all stepped in to give each segment of our "Dreams" sequence a different look. Next issue we'll get back to a more traditional one-penciller, one-inker system. Meanwhile, we thought you'd all enjoy the change of pace.*

—R. H.

FIRST—

THANK YOU for bringing Vampirella back after ten long years! I had almost given up hope of seeing old Vampi in action again. The story was first-rate—a Vampi classic—and the reissue of the old stories was also inspired. I, myself, have tons of old Warren Vampirellas, but now a whole new generation can enjoy and be brought up to date.

I started reading Vampirella back in the first grade, if you can believe it. Needless to say, my teachers were less than amused, and I was always getting sent home with letters to my parents suggesting that they present me with more suitable reading material! Luckily for me, my parents thought that Vampirella was just fine, as long as it wasn't all I read.

Now that Vampi's back, any chance for a return by the Vampirella artist, José Gonzalez? His artwork remains classic even after all these years. The artwork on the new Vampi is O.K., but she really deserves the very best there is, i. e. José.

I wish you much success with this new venture. I hope there's never again a time when Vampi is unavailable.

Bradley Stroden
4103
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Chicago, Ill 60632

WE'RE AFRAID SHE'S taken, pal. Oh, you mean when her comics series is unavailable?! Well, we'll be doing our best to provide her with a long run of new adventures. All you readers have to do is to buy the issues, and recommend them to your friends and retailers.

Your childhood experience with Vampirella *(how odd that sounds!) is probably not typical. Warren's line of magazines were made more attractive by their air of the forbidden, and* Vampirella *featured more forbidden subjects than* Creepy *or* Famous Monsters. *You have remarkably open-minded parents, for which you should feel grateful.*

CONGRATULATIONS on a truly wonderful comeback for Vampirella *in Morning in America, Book One.*

Kurt Busiek has a unique talent for smooth narrative that never becomes confusing, even when complicated. His flashback sequences were handled in a clear, unmuddled fashion, and offered the necessary "catch-up" information to us readers. I feel I am totally caught up on the events of the past decade during her absence.

Seeing old supporting characters like the Van Helsings, and —of course— Ethan Shroud made the revival that much better. Shroud, particularly, is an exciting nemesis. I like him so much, I'm almost rooting for him. Very charismatic.

As to your penciller, Louis LaChance is not my idea of a proper Vampi artist, though at times his drawing was very well done. I would like to see him jazz up the panels a little more, really open up the talent I see hidden in his work. After all, he's following in the footsteps of José Gonzalez, and he ain't small potatoes, pal.

John Nyberg should try using wash or more tones to embellish the work here. On black and white comics, I've never been satisfied with simply the absence of color. There has to be some variance of shading.

Chris Khalaf
PO Box 925142
Houston, TX 77292-5142

WE'RE GLAD YOU appreciate the talent and commitment that Kurt B. put into the complex script of Morning in America. It brought nothing but raves from the readers.

We're working with Louis to get that opened-up look you favor. By now you'll have seen the great strides our penciller has made on issues #2 and #3.

John Nyberg was editorially instructed to avoid wash tones, due to our plans to retain our option of re-publishing Morning in America later, in color. John has been experimenting with zip-a-tone, conte crayon, etc., to pick up some of the slack, and we hope that that compromise meets with your approval.

AS A 35-YEAR old former comics collector, Vampirella has a favored place in my memories of adolescence. I even had a six-foot poster of Vampi on my dorm room door in college. Moreover, she was a new departure in the vampire tradition. As the storyline developed, Vampi, the Van Helsings, Pendragon et al took on life and excitement.

You can imagine my pleasure when I came upon *Vampirella: Morning in America, Book One.* Too good to be true! She's back!

Re: the cover. I think the cover art by Michael Kaluta will become another classic.

Re: the story. Not a bad job in connecting the past and the present. Maybe I wasn't paying close enough attention, but I didn't suspect who "Miss Normandy" was until you popped the surprise. Adam and Vampi are back together now, but what will happen to Chelsea? Will she become a "little sister" figure to Vampi? I'm waiting eagerly to find out.

Brian Gregory
349 Apollo Beach Road #304
Apollo Beach FL 33572

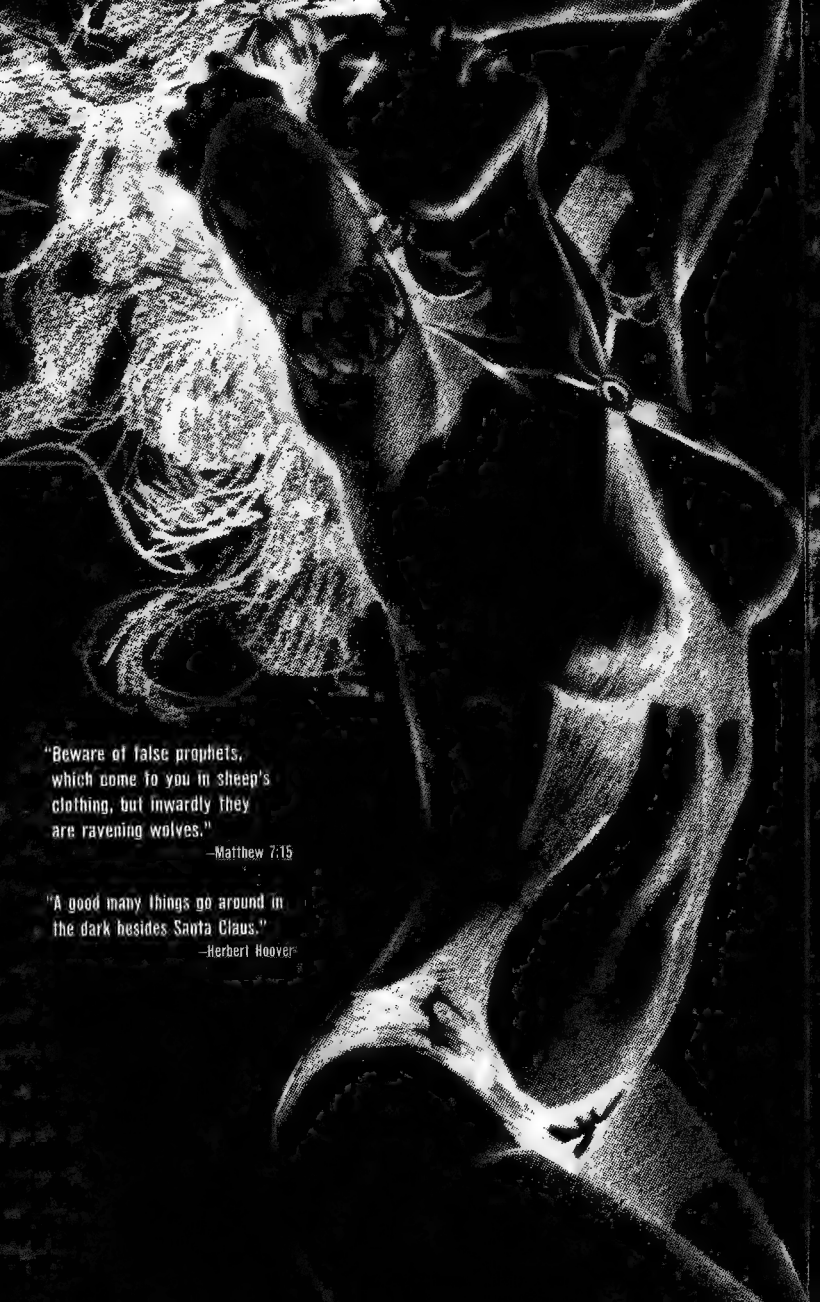
IT LOOKS LIKE our approach to Vampirella–of using her past as a foundation for her new life–was a crowd-pleaser. Rest assured, you're dealing with a writer and an editor who find much to admire in Vampi's original run.

We are looking into the feasibility of releasing one (or more) of Kaluta's gorgeous covers as posters.

"Miss Normandy" seems to have caught everyone off-guard, although any of Vampi's former fans—especially any of those with prodigious memories for trivia—might remember that she used the name as an alias she used during a time-trip to the 19th century.

Do we have plans for Chelsea? DO WE HAVE PLANS FOR CHELSEA!!

Send all letters to:
ON LITTLE BAT WINGS
c/o Harris Comics
1115 Broadway, 8th floor
New York, NY 11010



"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."
—Matthew 7:15

"A good many things go around in the dark besides Santa Claus."
—Herbert Hoover

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN:
HE'S DEAD.
MY FATHER'S DEAD. AGAIN.
CHELSEA...
THERE IS A STORY THEY TELL ABOUT WASHINGTON D.C. FROM A TIME BEFORE IT WAS A CITY, WHEN IT WAS MOSTLY NOTHING BUT SALT MARSH.
ACCORDING TO THE STORY, THE WAR CHIEF OF THE DELAWARE INDIANS MET WITH A RIVAL WAR LEADER THERE, DURING A TIME OF TROUBLE BETWEEN THE TRIBES.
THE SEAT OF DESOLATION

THE TWO MEN MET TO MAKE A BARGAIN AND PREVENT A WAR.
AFTER HER, VAMPIRELLA! DON'T LET HER ESCAPE!

BUT THE DELAWARE WAR CHIEF MURDERED THE OTHER, WEIGHTED THE BODY WITH GREAT STONES AND SUNK IT IN THE SWAMP.
WAIT! WAIT! TWO SECONDS!

THAT WAS THE FIRST BARGAIN AND THE FIRST BETRAYAL IN WASHINGTON, AND THE TWO HAVE GONE HAND IN HAND EVER SINCE.
OR SO THE STORY GOES.

VAMPIRELLA, PLEASE!
GOT THEM!

SOME SAY THE STORY IS TRUE. SOME SAY IT'S A TOTAL FABRICATION.
THESE RINGS--YOU MAY NEED THEM!
WEAR THEM, AND EACH OF YOU WILL BE ABLE TO FIND THE OTHER--WHEREVER YOU ARE!

SOME SAY IT'S BASED ON FACT, BUT HAS BEEN DISTORTED BY TIME AND BY HISTORIANS WITH AXES TO GRIND.
THANKS, PEN. FOLLOW HOWEVER YOU CAN, ADAM.
I WON'T LOSE HER.

THAT'S WASHINGTON FOR YOU.

THAT'S THE WAY IT'S ALWAYS BEEN.
YOU.
AND YOU, AND YOU. AND YOU.
COME WITH ME. I REQUIRE YOUR ASSISTANCE.
YOU OVERREACH YOURSELF, ETHAN SHROUD
YOUR POWER COMES FROM US, SHROUD. WE ARE YOUR PARTNERS, NOT YOUR SERVANTS. WE ARE THE UNSEELIE CONGRESS.
WE MADE A BARGAIN WITH YOU--WE CHANNEL THE OCCULT POWER OF THIS NATION TO YOU SO THAT CREATURES MAY WALK THE EARTH ONCE MORE
WE DEMAND THAT YOU HONOR YOUR BARGAIN.
AH. OPEN REBELLION. I EXPECTED THIS SOONER.
LET ME EXPLAIN SOMETHING TO ALL OF YOU.
THE CHANNEL THAT DELIVERS YOUR POWER TO ME IS IRREVOCABLE. IT CAN ONLY BE BROKEN BY YOUR DEATHS.
YOUR POWER IS MINE--TO DO WITH AS I WISH.
NUBERUS WILL NOT RETURN TO EARTH. INSTEAD, HE WILL DIE.
I--THROUGH MY CHOSEN AGENT, VAMPIRELLA--SHALL BE HIS MURDERER. AND THEN I WILL RULE OVER ALL.
THERE WILL BE NO DISCUSSION. THIS IS NOT A DEMOCRATIC BODY.
YOU ARE NOT MY PARTNERS. YOU ARE NOT EVEN MY SERVANTS.
YOU ARE MY SLAVES.

THE BARGAIN YOU MADE WAS A BAD ONE. FOR YOU.
I FIND IT MORE THAN SATISFACTORY. AM I UNDERSTOOD?
SNAP
THE WAY IT'S ALWAYS BEEN.
VAMPIRELLA KEENS. AND THE ECHOES OUTLINE THE FLUTTERING SHAPE IN FRONT OF HER
AND OTHER SHAPES-- THE STATELY HOMES OF WASHINGTON.
WHICH ARISTOCRATIC FACADE HIDES ETHAN SHROUD'S EVIL? ONE OF THEM? ALL OF THEM? DOES IT MATTER?
HER PAST IS A LIE-- SHROUD'S DEMONS HAVE SHOWN HER ITS CONTRADICTIONS.
THEY OFFER NOTHING TO TAKE ITS PLACE. DOES ANYTHING MATTER-- IF SHE DOESN'T EVEN KNOW WHO SHE IS?
BUT NO-- INNOCENCE MATTERS. AND FEAR. AND PAIN.
CHELSEA CANTRELL IS LOST-- SURROUNDED BY EVIL. HER BODY AND SOUL CORRUPTED AGAINST HER WILL.
SOMEONE HAS TO SEE HER HOME SAFE FROM THIS AWFUL CITY.
SOMEONE HAS TO SEE THE WHOLE COUNTRY HOME SAFE.

SHE WENT IN HERE-- DIDN'T EVEN SLOW DOWN WHEN SHE REACHED THE WINDOW.
SHROUD'S CALL MUST BE VERY STRONG.
THE TANG OF BLOOD IS SHARP-- BUT IT'S NOT CHELSEA'S.
CONRAD'S SHE WAS DRENCHED IN IT.
BUT BEYOND THAT SMELL--BENEATH IT--THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE.
THE CATACOMBS.
IT HAS ONLY BEEN A MATTER OF HOURS-- HOURS?-- SINCE VAMPIRELLA LAST DESCENDED INTO THESE TUNNELS, BUT THINGS WERE SO DIFFERENT THEN.
THEN, SHE HAD FRIENDS BEHIND HER TO ADD THEIR COURAGE TO HERS AND FIGHT AT HER SIDE.
THEN, SHE HAD A SENSE OF HERSELF-- WHO SHE WAS AND WHAT SHE MEANT TO THE WORLD.
NOW SHE HAS NEITHER.

CAN YOU SENSE HER, ADAM?
SHE'S UP AHEAD--SOMEWHERE NEAR KALORAMA CIRCLE.
I THINK.
TRUST THE RINGS--THEY ARE EXTREMELY ANCIENT, AND OF UNDISPUTABLE PROVENANCE.
AS LONG AS A BOND OF LOVE EXISTS BETWEEN YOU THEY WILL NOT FAIL.
THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN YOURS YEARS AGO.
...BUT I'D BEEN SAVING THEM AS A WEDDING PRESENT, AND WELL...
I'M GLAD YOU STOPPED WAITING.
I KNOW YOU AND I HAVEN'T BEEN THE BEST OF FRIENDS, PENDRAGON--BUT I WANT YOU TO KNOW I THINK YOU'RE ALL RIGHT.
WHY THANK YOU, ADAM. I--
THERE IT IS!
SHE'S BEEN HERE.
INDUBITABLY.
THE TRAIL LEADS...
OH.
OH, GREAT.

DOWN THERE?
AFRAID SO
YOU DON'T HAVE TO COME, YOU KNOW HE WAS MY FATHER
SENATOR VAN HELSING..
..DON'T BE RIDICULOUS.
SHE IMAGINES SHE HEARS THE VOICES OF THE DEAD CHITTERING AT HER, TELLING HER SHE'LL JOIN THEM SOON.
SHE IMAGINES THE SMELLS AND THE TASTES AND THE FEELINGS THIS CHAMBER HAS HELD OVER THE YEARS--ALL THE FLAYING AND THE BEGGING AND THE DYING.
OR PERHAPS THE SENSATIONS ARE REAL, AND SHE SIMPLY CAN'T TELL THE DIFFERENCE ANYMORE
CHELSEA.. CHELSEA, ARE YOU HERE?
CAN'T DISTINGUISH BETWEEN ILLUSION AND REALITY ANY LONGER..

...BETWEEN FEAR AND FACT.
ARRRRR!
KILD
WHRACCK
FIGHT HIM, CHELSEA-- RESIST HIM!
YOU CAN BREAK FREE! YOU--

HRAH!
KLD
HAH! HHH--!
NO!
HE HAD BEGUN TO THINK OF HER AS A SCHOOL-GIRL AGAIN, THE IMAGE OF HER CROUCHED OVER HIS FATHER'S BROKEN BODY WAS FADING.
BUT IT RETURNS IN A RUSH.
ANIMAL, HIS MIND SHRIEKS. BLOOD-THIRSTY, FOUL, MURDEROUS ANIMAL!
YOU WON'T--
AND THEN HE SEES HER EYES
HER EYES.
AND HIS MIND IS SUDDENLY FULL OF OTHER THINGS HE HAS TO DO:
BILLS WAITING TO BE READ BEFORE THEY'RE VOTED ON. COMMITTEE MEETINGS TO PREPARE FOR. A CONDOLENCE CALL TO MAKE ON VALERIE'S PARENTS.
HE HAS OFTEN THOUGHT, OVER THE PAST DECADE, THAT THE WAITING, THE FRUSTRATION, WAS THE WORST HE COULD ENDURE--THE INABILITY TO DO ANYTHING.
HE WAS WRONG.

THE DOING IS THE WORST.
CHK
AAAA
AAAAAAAAA
ADAM---!
OH, ADAM, NO!
AAAAAAAAAH!

YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO--
IT WASN'T HER FAULT--
I KNOW.
BUT DON'T YOU SEE WHAT SHROUD IS DOING?
HE'S PLAYING WITH US-- PLAYING US AGAINST OUR-SELVES.
MY FATHER, CHELSEA-- THEY WERE JUST LURES TO HIM, WAYS TO TANGLE US UP IN OUR EMOTIONS AND KEEP US FROM FOCUSING ON HIM.
HE WANTS YOU, VAMPIRELLA, AND HE'LL KEEP TRYING UNTIL HE GETS YOU.
WHO'S HE GOING TO USE AS HIS NEXT PAWN? ME? PENDRAGON?
WE'VE GOT TO STOP PLAYING HIS GAMES-- WE CAN'T WIN BY HIS RULES.
WE'VE GOT TO GET SHROUD HIMSELF. THAT'S THE ONLY WAY TO END IT.
HOW CLEVER-- YOU'VE STARTED THINKING PRACTICALLY.
I NEVER THOUGHT YOU WOULD.
A PITY IT COMES TOO LATE.

END CHAPTER THIRTEEN

BLOOD
BEEN TIME SINCE LAST
NOT LONG TIME
JUST TIME
LAST WAS SOFT ONE SQUEALED
NOT POWERFUL BUT STILL GOODGOOD
BLOODBLOODBLOOD
BEFORE SOFT ONE LONGLONGLONG LONG
IN HARD EGG LONGLONG LONGLONG
SO LONGLONG HUNGRY
OUT NOW
HATCHED
BLOOD NEAR
BLOOD SOON
SOON
IK IIK

SO.
HERE WE ARE, THEN.
YES. HERE THEY *ARE*. WHERE HE'D DREAMED OF BEING LONG BEFORE HE COULD ADMIT IT TO HIMSELF. AT *LAST*.
ETHAN SHROUD FEELS THE POWER FLOW AROUND HIM, *THROUGH* HIM. LITTLE EDDIES OF FEAR. TIDES OF PAIN. WAVES OF DEATH. THE POWER OF A COUNTRY-- *HIS*, ALL HIS.
CHAPTER FOURTEEN
INSOLENCE and WINE

HE IS THE MOST POWERFUL MAN IN THE WORLD. IMMORTAL. UNSTOPPABLE.
SNAPP
YOU--
--YOU KILLED MY FATHER, YOU SON OF A--
IT FEELS GOOD. HE IS TERRIBLE IN HIS WRATH.
THE ALTAR. SECURE HIM.
WHRAKK
AND YET--CAN HE NOT BE MAGNANIMOUS IN HIS MERCY AS WELL?
AH, VAMPIRELLA...
..TIME HAS NOT DULLED THE GLOW OF YOUR BEAUTY NOR EXTINGUISHED THE FLAME WITHIN YOU.
YOU ARE AS LOVELY AS THE DAY I FIRST BEHELD YOU.
IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT? IS THAT WHY YOU'VE DONE ALL THIS? TO TRY TO SEDUCE ME?
YOU'RE A WORM, SHROUD.
HA HA. HE IS BEYOND PETTY ANGER NOW.
SO FEARLESS, VAMPIRELLA. SO SELF-CONFIDENT, SO BOLD. WHAT IS IT THAT GIVES YOU THIS STRENGTH? WHAT CENTER DO YOU CLING TO?
PERHAPS THAT'S WHY YOU ENCHANT ME SO. YOU'RE AN ETERNAL MYSTERY TO ME--AND I KNOW YOU SO MUCH BETTER THAN YOU DO YOURSELF!

YOU--YOU KNOW WHO I REALLY AM?
IK
IIIIIK
OF COURSE I DO.
I'M NOT SURPRISED YOU'VE DISCOVERED YOUR MEMORIES TO BE CONTRADICTORY. DREAD CHAOS HAS MANY STRENGTHS--
--BUT CONSISTENCY IS NOT ONE OF THEM.
YOU MEAN--MY PAST... DRAKULON... IT'S ALL A LIE? ALL OF IT?
NO. IT'S ALL TRUE--OR IT WAS AT THE TIME. IT JUST CHANGED. SUCH IS THE POWER OF THE DREAD GOD CHAOS--
AND SUCH WILL BE MY POWER AS WELL, ONCE I'VE SLAIN GREAT NUBEROUS AND WON FROM HIM THE POWER TO CHALLENGE CHAOS HIMSELF
I HAVE YOU TO THANK FOR THAT, YOU KNOW.
WITHOUT YOUR EXAMPLE--WITHOUT YOUR REBELLIOUS SPIRIT TO SHOW ME THE WAY--
--I WOULD NEVER HAVE THOUGHT TO BETRAY MY MASTERS, TO SEIZE POWER FOR MYSELF.
AH, VAMPIRELLA. I OWE YOU SO MUCH...
...WHAT SHALL I DO WITH YOU?

WE MUST DO SOMETHING!
I FEEL MY STRENGTH DRAINING TO HIM EVEN NOW!
THE TARNN AGREE! WE ARE THE ELITE OF THE NIGHT! WE ARE SWORN TO THE SERVICE OF NUBERUS!
WE CANNOT ALLOW HIM TO BE SLAIN BY THAT--THAT UPSTART HUMAN!
THE SHADOWS... THE SHADOWS DEEPEN...
WHAT IS IT, LETHIS? WHAT DO YOU SEE IN THE SHADOWS?
THE BONES ROLL AND CLACK... I SEE BLOOD... BLOOD AND PAIN...
THE SMELL OF BLOOD-LUST, HEAVY AND SWEET, FILLS THE CHAMBER.
SHE MUST BE ON THE EDGE--BARELY ABLE TO RESTRAIN HER HUNGER.
DO YOUR WORST, SHROUD. JUST GET IT OVER WITH.
PERHAPS HE WILL NOT HAVE TO BURN OUT HER MIND TO WIN HER.
YOU THIRST, VAMPIRELLA--THE ANIMAL NEED WELLS UP WITHIN YOU. I CAN SENSE IT.
IT WOULD BE A PITY TO QUENCH THAT FIRE.
GIVE IN TO IT. JOIN ME--TAKE WHAT YOU WANT. LET YOUR DESIRES RUN WILD, UN-FETTERED -- NOTHING WILL STAND AGAINST US!
AKH!
BLOOD
BLOODBLOOD BLOOD BLOOD
OH, PLEASE. WHY DO YOU PEOPLE KEEP OFFERING ME ADAM'S BLOOD?
DO YOU THINK I DON'T KNOW IT'S IN THERE?

BUT--YOUR BLOOD-LUST--I STILL FEEL IT.
YOU MUST BE WILD WITH NEED--OUT OF CONTROL--
COME ON, SHROUD--
BLOOOD BLOOOOOOD
--THE LADY SAID SHE'S NOT INTERESTED. AND FRANKLY--
--I'M GETTING A LITTLE SICK OF BEING TREATED LIKE A BAG LUNCH.
NOW LET US GO OR I'LL SNAP YOUR--
--GHAK!
WHAT?! NO!
NO!!
NOT MY BLOODLUST, SHROUD.
NO... PLEASE...
HE FEELS THE SANGUIVIRE DEEP IN HIS THROAT, GREEDILY SUCKING, SUCKING. HE FEELS THE TAINT OF IT SPREADING THROUGH HIS BODY.

HE FEELS THE POWER SURGE AT HIS COMMAND--FEELS THE SANGUIVIRE SHRED BENEATH IT--
--AND HE KNOWS HE IS TOO LATE.
THE SANGUIVIRE'S BITE WILL TAKE HIM. ALTER HIM.
HE WILL BE A VAMPIRE. ONLY A VAMPIRE. MORE THAN HUMAN--BUT SO MUCH LESS THAN HE WAS.
HIS SPELLS WILL END. HIS POWER WILL BE LOST. HIS SLAVES WILL TURN ON HIM.
HE WILL BE HUNTED.
CAPTURED.
DESTROYED.
IT'S NOT FAIR.
NOT... FAIR...
NUBERUS... SAVE ME...
GREAT NUBERUS...

...I'M SORRY...
...DIDN'T MEAN...
...JUST SAVE ME... SAVE MY POWER...

YOU THINK OF POWER AS SOMETHING THAT CAN BE STOLEN, ETHAN SHROUD.
SOMETHING THAT CAN BE HOARDED.
YOU ARE WRONG.

WHAT--?
THAT VOICE--!

...PLEASE...
POWER IS NOT POWER UNLESS IT IS FREELY GIVEN.
AND POWER IS NOT POWER UNLESS IT IS USED.

THE HUMANS THINK THAT POWER CAN BE HANDED FROM ONE TO ANOTHER, AS A LORD MIGHT TAKE OFFERINGS OF RICE FROM HIS PEASANTS.
AND YOU HAVE COME TO BELIEVE THIS AS WELL.
YOU FORGET THAT THOUGH THE OVERLORD HAS THE MOST RICE, HE DOES NOT GROW THE RICE, HARVEST THE RICE, OR COOK THE RICE.
YOU THINK THAT WITH THE RICE IN YOUR CELLARS, YOU CAN FORGET THE PEASANTS--
--THAT THEY WILL BRING THE RICE TO THEIR LORDS THE NEXT YEAR AND THE NEXT, AND THE LORDS WILL BRING IT TO YOU.
NO... PLEASE...
YOU THINK THAT THE LORDS WILL BRING YOU THEIR RICE THOUGH YOU BEAT THEIR PEASANTS AND DESTROY THEIR FIELDS.
BUT WHERE IS THE RICE WHEN THE FIELDS HAVE BEEN DESTROYED? WHERE IS THE LORD WHOSE PEASANTS ARE DEAD?
CCCAN ITT BBBEE??
OH MASTER...
NO, ETHAN SHROUD.
IF YOU DESIRE RICE...

HE COMES! I FEEL IT! HE COMES!
THE GREAT ONE COMES!
...YOU MUST NEVER FORGET THE FARMERS...
DELIA CONNER BOUGHT THAT BOOK FOR HER SON-IN-LAW. HE LIKES THAT CREEPY STUFF.
BUT HERE IT IS ALMOST MORNING, AND SHE CAN'T SLEEP.
AND THERE'S NOTHING ON THE TEEVEE.
HMP. TALKIN' TO DEAD PEOPLE. RIGHT.
SURE LIKE TO TALK TO RON THOUGH. HE ALWAYS MADE ME LAUGH...
YOU CAN SEE RON AGAIN IF YOU WISH.
WHAT? WHOZAT?!

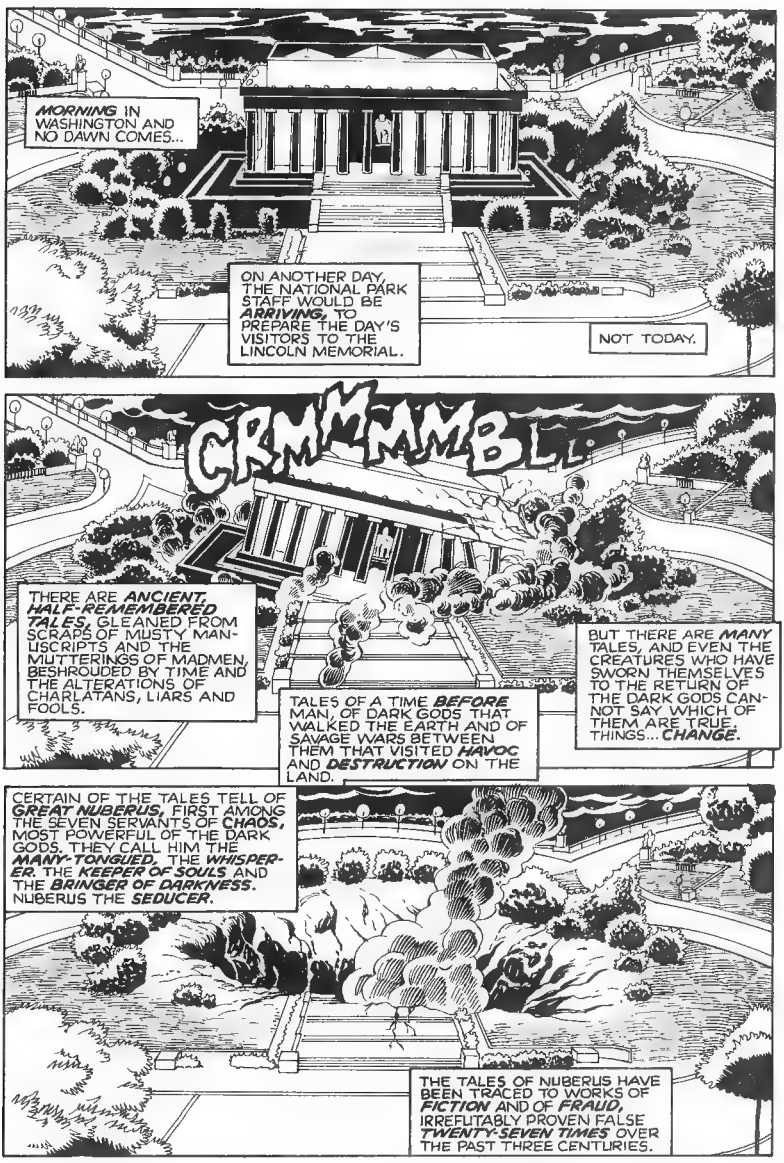
MARTIN BRIDGEMAN CAN'T REMEMBER WHERE HE HAD PICKED UP THE BOOK--IT HAD BEEN THROUGH MANY OWNERS BEFORE IT REACHED HIM.
BUT HE ALWAYS CARRIES IT IN HIS PACK, ALONG WITH HIS SKETCHBOOK.
IT GIVES HIM IDEAS.
YOU COULD BE THE BEST, MARTIN IT COULD BE ON THE CANVAS JUST THE WAY IT IS IN YOUR HEAD...
ASTRID LUNDKVIST NEVER EVEN SAW THE BOOK. BUT ON HER BUS HOME YESTERDAY, SHE SAT NEXT TO SOMEONE WHO FLIPPED THROUGH IT ONCE.
AND SHE'S WISHING SHE COULD GET THAT PROMOTION.
AND THIS MORNING...
IS SOMEONE THERE?
...THAT'S ENOUGH.
CONNIE O'HARA WANTS A NEW CAR...
DAVIS HOUGHTON WANTS A YOUNG BOY...
EVERYBODY WANTS SOMETHING
THEY'VE BEEN TOLD ALL THEIR LIVES WHAT TO WANT, WHO TO FOLLOW, WHAT TO CARE ABOUT, HOW TO ACT, WHAT LINE TO STAND IN.
AND NOW THE VOICE IS WITH THEM.
JUMP THE LINE, IT SEEMS TO SAY. FORGET THE RULES. TELL ME--

YOU'VE STUDIED THIS FOR YEARS, ADAM--YOU MUST KNOW IT BETTER THAN I. IT'S NUBERUS! HE'S USING SHROUD'S BODY AS A GATEWAY!
HE'S COMING THROUGH! HE'S COMING BACK!?

END CHAPTER FOURTEEN

MORNING IN WASHINGTON AND NO DAWN COMES...
ON ANOTHER DAY, LIFE WOULD BE TOOTHBRUSHES, BREAKFAST, PAPERBOYS, THE START OF THE DAILY COMMUTE.
NOT TODAY.
TODAY IS A DRY, INSULATING, WHISPER FROM NOWHERE AND FROM EVERYWHERE.
FREEDOM, EQUALITY, LAW, SELF-DETERMINATION-- WHAT ARE THESE THINGS?
SOFT, GENTLE.
YOU CANNOT TOUCH THEM. YOU CANNOT SPEND THEM. YOU CANNOT EAT THEM.
KIND.
THEY ARE NOTHING, THESE THINGS--AND YET YOU ARGUE AND FIGHT AND EVEN DIE FOR THEM.
CONCERNED.
ADMIT THE TRUTH TO YOURSELF. YOU DO NOT NEED THESE THINGS.
O'HARA
CARING.
YOU DO NOT EVEN TRULY WANT THEM.
IT'S A NICE VOICE.

MORNING IN WASHINGTON AND NO DAWN COMES...
ON ANOTHER DAY, THE UNSEELIE CONGRESS WOULD BE ABANDONING THE CAPITOL BUILDING, GIVING IT UP TO THE DENIZENS OF THE DAY CITY.
NOT TODAY.
IT IS NOW. IT IS THE TIME. IT IS NOW!!
HE COMES, HE COMES.
HE HAS SLEPT IN DEATH AND NOW HE COMES!
HE HAS SLEPT IN THE ALABASTER CITY, SLEPT IN THE NETHER-VOID, AND NOW HE COMES!
HE HAS SENT HIS DREAMS AMONG US, AND NOW HE SENDS HIS FLESH! HE COMES!
FIRST AMONG THE SEVEN!
TAKE OUR STRENGTH, GREAT ONE!
TAKE US UNTO YOU...
TAKE OUR LIVES, GREAT ONE!


MORNING IN WASHINGTON AND NO DAWN COMES...
ON ANOTHER DAY, THE NATIONAL PARK STAFF WOULD BE ARRIVING, TO PREPARE THE DAY'S VISITORS TO THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL.
NOT TODAY.
CRMMMAMBLL
THERE ARE ANCIENT, HALF-REMEMBERED TALES, GLEANED FROM SCRAPS OF MUSTY MANUSCRIPTS AND THE MUTTERINGS OF MADMEN, BESHROUDED BY TIME AND THE ALTERATIONS OF CHALATANS, LIARS AND FOOLS.
TALES OF A TIME BEFORE MAN, OF DARK GODS THAT WALKED THE EARTH AND OF SAVAGE WARS BETWEEN THEM THAT VISITED HAVOC AND DESTRUCTION ON THE LAND.
BUT THERE ARE MANY TALES, AND EVEN THE CREATURES WHO HAVE SWORN THEMSELVES TO THE RETURN OF THE DARK GODS CANNOT SAY WHICH OF THEM ARE TRUE. THINGS... CHANGE.
CERTAIN OF THE TALES TELL OF GREAT NUBERUS, FIRST AMONG THE SEVEN SERVANTS OF CHAOS, MOST POWERFUL OF THE DARK GODS. THEY CALL HIM THE MANY-TONGUED, THE WHISPERER, THE KEEPER OF SOULS AND THE BRINGER OF DARKNESS. NUBERUS THE SEDUCER.
THE TALES OF NUBERUS HAVE BEEN TRACED TO WORKS OF FICTION AND OF FRAUD, IRREFUTABLY PROVEN FALSE TWENTY-SEVEN TIMES OVER THE PAST THREE CENTURIES.

MORNING IN WASHINGTON AND NO DAWN COMES.
CHAPTER FIFTEEN
WITHOUT ALL HOPE OF DAY

THEY ALL HEAR IT.
:Huff:
A WAY TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR YOU TO ATTAIN THAT WHICH YOU TRULY WANT?
WHAT IS THIS "JUSTICE," THIS "LIBERTY," BUT A MEANS TO AN END?
YOU NEED NOT CLING TO THESE USELESS THINGS A MOMENT LONGER. SIMPLY TELL ME WHAT YOU WANT.
TELL ME WHAT YOU WANT--AND IT SHALL BE YOURS.
THE SKY--IT'S SO DARK--
THAT'S NUBERUS, ALL RIGHT. HE'S THE BRINGER OF DARKNESS--HIS REBIRTH TRIGGERS THE ETERNAL NIGHT THAT HERALDS THE RETURN OF CHAOS.
I'M GOING TO SCOUT THE AREA.
I DON'T WANT TO BE AMBUSHED WHILE WE'RE FIGURING OUT WHAT TO DO ABOUT NUBERUS. STAY HERE, YOU TWO.
THE NET IS CAST WIDE AT FIRST AND COVERS A GREAT AREA OF SEA.
AS IT IS DRAWN IN, THE NET ENTANGLES FIRST THE FISH WHO SWIM AT ITS FARTHEST REACHES...
ANYTHING YOU DESIRE. ANYTHING.
DUTCH COURAGE, ADAM? I KNOW IT'S NOT MUCH, BUT--
...AND THEN THE FISH IN ITS MIDDLE RANGES...
...AND ONLY AT THE LAST...
ADAM?
...ONLY AT THE LAST THOSE FISH AT THE CENTER OF THE NET.

ADAM!
STAY AWAY FROM ME, DAD!
THIS ISN'T REAL--THIS IS JUST ANOTHER CLAWED DREAM!
REAL? PFAH! WHAT DOES IT MATTER IF IT'S REAL?
REAL IS TROUBLE. IF IT'S REAL, TWO PEOPLE WHO WANT THE SAME THING HAVE TO FIGHT OVER IT.
BUT NUBERUS CAN GIVE THEM BOTH WHAT THEY WANT. NUBERUS CAN GIVE YOU EVERYTHING.
YOU DON'T NEED IT TO BE REAL.
IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT?
AND WHAT DOES NUBERUS GET OUT OF IT?
THERE'S A FLASH IN CONRAD VAN HELSING'S EYES AND FOR A MOMENT ADAM SEES MILES-HIGH FLAMES, AND OILY SMOKE...
YOU DON'T NEED THAT, EITHER. WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?
...AND HUGE SHAPES MOVING SLOWLY THROUGH SHADOW...
I'VE DIED TWICE, ADAM. THE SECOND TIME I DIED IN YOUR ARMS. CAN YOU JUST THROW ME BACK?

AD--
DADDY!
SARA?
ROSE?
MORDECAI, MY DARLING, IT'S BEEN SO LONG. CAN YOU FORGIVE US FOR TURNING AWAY FROM YOU?
FORGIVE YOU? BUT--
IT'S ALL RIGHT, DADDY--WE'RE BACK. NUBERUS HAS BROUGHT US BACK TO YOU.
ISN'T IT GREAT?
BUT--BUT I DESERTED YOU--RUINED YOUR LIVES!
I-I'M UNWORTHY OF YOUR LOVE. I'M UNWORTHY OF ANYONE'S LOVE.
BUT THAT'S THE BEST PART, DADDY--
--YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE WORTHY!

LOOKS LIKE THE OTHER CREATURES IN THIS AREA WENT UP IN SMOKE THE WAY THE ONES IN THE CHAMBER--
--ADAM? PEN?
OH, GREAT.

WHY DOES THIS KEEP HAPPENING--?
...AND ONLY AT THE LAST...
SNAP SNAP

NUBERUS!
LET THEM GO, NUBERUS! LET THEM GO AND FACE ME!

...ONLY AT THE LAST THOSE FISH AT THE CENTER OF THE NET...
AH, LITTLE ONE...

...THERE IS NO NEED FOR THIS ANGER. NO NEED FOR THIS HOSTILITY.

TWO SUCH AS WE SHOULD NOT BATTLE. NOT WHEN THERE IS SO MUCH WE CAN DO FOR EACH OTHER...
NUBERUS FLOATS ABOVE WASHINGTON--BORNE UPWARD BY BELIEF AND TRUST AND HOPE.
BORNE UPWARD BY THE PEOPLE, THE FARMERS, THE FISH.
BORNE UPWARD...
RISE, LITTLE ONE.
...NOT WHEN THERE IS SO MUCH FOR US TO TALK ABOUT.
RISE AND JOIN ME.
NUBERUS SPEAKS, SOFT AND GENTLE...

...BUT NUBERUS HAS MORE VOICES THAN ONE...
IN ANACOSTIA, DELIA CONNER TALKS WITH HER HUSBAND...
--AND AUSTRALIA? DO THEM KANGAROOS REALLY BOX LIKE I SEEN?
THEY WILL NOT DIE, THOSE TOUCHED BY NUBERUS'S VOICE.
IN NEARBY GAITHERSBURG, LAWRENCE WATT-EVANS COLLABORATES ON A NOVEL WITH LORD DUNSANY..
--AND AT THE NIGHT, THE SHADOWY MEN MEET TO PLAY AT WHIST AND DISCUSS THE DAY--
GREAT!
NUBERUS BARGAINS FAIRLY. THEY WILL INDEED GET THEIR WISHES--
MANY MORE VOICES THAN ONE...
IN CHICAGO, FELIX TORRANCE CONTEMPLATES THE COMING TRIUMPH OF TOMORROW'S PRESENTATION...
AND WHAT IT WILL COST THEM, WHAT NUBERUS WILL TAKE FROM THEM IN RETURN--
IN YAKIMA, MARILYN PALERMO IS ASKING FOR A WAY TO STOP THAT DAMNED TIMBER COMPANY...
YES. YES, THAT'S WHAT I WANT.
IT'S NOT SOMETHING THAT ONCE IT'S GONE, YOU MISS IT.
...AND NUBERUS'S WHISPERS BECOME A HUM...

FRANCE, JAPAN, AUSTRALIA, THE UKRAINE...
MIND TO MIND...SOUL TO SOUL...NUBERUS'S VOICES SPREAD ACROSS THE GLOBE, EVERY VOICE *SEPARATE*, BUT EVERY VOICE *CONNECTED*--
AND THE HUM BECOMES A *BUZZ*...
THE WEIGHT OF EACH MURMURED BARGAIN EXERTING *PRESSURE* ON THE BARGAINS NOT YET MADE--
THE STRENGTH OF EACH NEW AGREEMENT *REINFORCING* THE WHOLE--
--A WEB OF *COVENANTS*, A DELICATE TRACERY OF *PROMISES*...
...EACH STRAND *TUGGING* ON THE OTHERS, PULLING THEM INTO PLACE...
AND NUBERUS HAS *MANY* VOICES...
AND WHAT OF *YOU*, LITTLE ONE?

..AND IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WEB...
WHAT IS IT THAT YOU DESIRE MOST?
...OF THE NET...
...OF THE DARKNESS...
...OF THE VOICES...
THE TRUTH ABOUT YOURSELF?
YOU SHALL HAVE IT.

END CHAPTER FIFTEEN

IT'S AN ILLUSION.
THE GREAT PENDRAGON, STAGE MAGICIAN EXTRAORDINAIRE, HAS *DEALT* IN ILLUSION FOR YEARS AND KNOWS IT WHEN HE SEES IT...
GRAMPA?
DADDY, *PLEASE!* DON'T REJECT US! WE *LOVE* YOU!
IT'S *TRUE*, MORDECAI, *PLEASE*, DARLING. LET NUBERUS RETURN US TO YOU.
BUT IT WAS I...
BUT THAT DOESN'T MAKE IT ANY *EASIER*.
YOU NEEDED ME, AND I--I WASN'T THERE. IT WAS *MY FAULT*--
THEN WE *FORGIVE* YOU, MORDECAI, WE *ABSOLVE* YOU.
THAT DOESN'T MAKE IT ANY EASIER *AT ALL*.
AND SO DOES PATRICK! HE'S *GROWN*, DADDY--HE'S A TEENAGER NOW!
DON'T YOU WANT TO KNOW YOUR OWN *GRAND-SON*?
NO! YOU *CAN'T!!* YOU CAN'T *FORGIVE* ME!
YOU...
...CAN'T...
BUT AS BAD AS THE ILLUSION WAS...
...REALITY'S NO BETTER.
OH.
OH GOD.

OH GOD, NO.
CHAPTER SIXTEEN
CLOSE AT THE EAR OF EVE

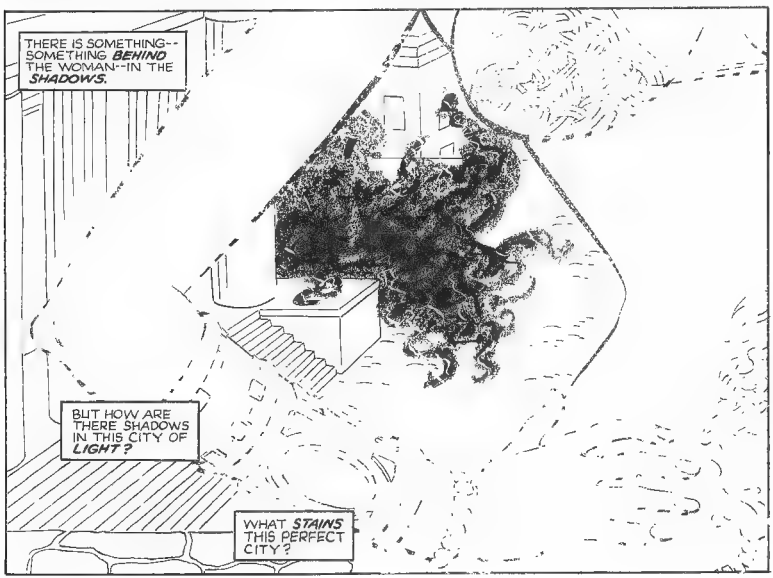
SOMEWHERE, IN A DETACHED CORNER OF HER MIND, VAMPIRELLA KNOWS THE TRUTH.
SHE KNOWS THAT NUBERUS'S BARGAIN WILL PLUNGE THE WORLD INTO DARKNESS-- WILL RESURRECT AN ANCIENT AND HORRIBLE TIME--
SHE KNOWS ALL THAT--
BUT NUBERUS KNOWS A TRUTH, TOO--THE TRUTH ABOUT HER PAST.
AND THAT IS WHAT HE OFFERS TO HER.
LET YOURSELF GO, LITTLE ONE...
AND THAT--
--THAT IS A TRUTH SHE CANNOT RESIST.
LET YOURSELF PASS OUT OF THIS WORLD--INTO THE PAST--INTO THE FUTURE--
--INTO THE REALITIES BEYOND REALITY--
--LET YOURSELF SEE--

DO YOU SEE IT, LITTLE ONE? DO YOU SEE THE CITY?
IT'S--
--IT'S SO BRIGHT--
--SO BEAUTIFUL.
--BUT IT'S--IT'S HARD TO--
--WHO IS THAT?

ADAM! ADAM, SPEAK TO ME! IT'S IMPORTANT!
..DAD...?
NO ADAM--IT'S PENDRAGON! WE MUST FREE VAMPIRELLA!
WE MUST FREE HER BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!
THE RINGS YOU WEAR! THEY LINK YOU! THEY'RE OUR ONLY HOPE OF MAKING CONTACT WITH HER!
DAMN IT, ADAM VAN HELSING! HEAR ME!
A WOMAN.
SHE CAN'T SEE CLEARLY, BUT SHE KNOWS IT'S A WOMAN.
AND SOMEHOW--
SHE CAN'T TELL HOW--

--SOMEHOW SHE KNOW THAT THE WOMAN IS NOT HER--
--BUT SHE KNOWS THIS WOMAN IS IMPORTANT--
--SHE HAS SEEN THIS WOMAN BEFORE--

--THE WOMAN IS--
AND A CHILL SLITHERS DOWN HER SPINE.
THE WOMAN IS NOT ALONE.


THERE IS SOMETHING-- SOMETHING BEHIND THE WOMAN--IN THE SHADOWS.
BUT HOW ARE THERE SHADOWS IN THIS CITY OF LIGHT?
WHAT STAINS THIS PERFECT CITY?

SNAP OUT OF IT, ADAM!
WHAK
...NO PROB, DAD... MACHINE'LL GET IT...
OOOH! TRUST A POLITICIAN TO BE BLIND TO THE TRUTH!
HE'S DEAD, ADAM, DEAD! YOU'VE LOST HIM!
AND YOU'RE LOSING VAMPIRELLA TOO! YOU'RE LOSING HER RIGHT NOW, YOU CLOTHEADED, THICK-SKULLED ACADEMIC!
LOSING HER?
VAMPIRELLA?
IT'S SUCH A LITTLE THING-- NO MORE THAN A SPARK--
THANK GOD.
BUT AS IT LEAPS FROM ADAM TO VAMPIRELLA--
--IT SHOWS HER SOMETHING SHE'D ALMOST FORGOTTEN--
--SHOWS HER WHAT SHE'S LOSING--
A-ADAM?
PENDRAGON?
BUT--
HER SUDDEN UNCERTAINTY AFFRONTS NUBERUS'S PEACE, A MISPLAYED CHORD. HE CLOSES IT OFF.

--BUT IT'S ALREADY IN HIS WEB, THE WEB THAT ENSNARES THE GLOBE-- IT'S ALREADY SETTING THE STRANDS A-JANGLE--
--BOUNCING FROM WASHINGTON TO SASKATCHEWAN TO KALGOORLIE TO LONDON AND BACK AND AROUND--
--AND THE HUMAN DOUBT--QUESTION-- THEY LOOK BEYOND THE PROMISES AND WONDER ABOUT THE COST--
--AND ALOFT ON HIS CUSHION OF TRUST AND BELIEF, NUBERUS SLIPS AND FALTERS.
IT IS NOTHING. THE DOUBTERS ALREADY START TO FALL BACK INTO LINE- A MOMENTARY UNEASE, NOTHING MORE. THE WEB WILL MEND ITSELF.
BUT HE WILL NOT LET HER ESCAPE.
SHE MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO ESCAPE.
LITTLE ONE
WHERE... WHAT...
--YOUR PAST-- --YOUR TRUTH--
HIS VOICE IS HONEYED, SOOTHING. IT OOZES WITH CONCERN, WITH KINDNESS.
--YOU MUST LET YOURSELF GO AGAIN--YOU MUST LET YOURSELF SEE THE--

NO!
HE SHOULD NOT HAVE MADE THE ATTEMPT. THE WEB WAS DAMAGED-- IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN REPAIRED FIRST.
I WANT THE TRUTH, NUBERUS-- AND I WON'T GIVE UP UN-TILL I HAVE IT.
BUT I DON'T WANT IT AT YOUR PRICE. NEVER AT YOUR PRICE.
THE WEB IS SHREDDED NOW. IT WILL NO LONGER SUPPORT HIM.
AS HE FALLS, NUBERUS REACHES OUT TO THE TROUBLED SOULS, THE QUESTIONING SOULS. THEY CAME WILLINGLY, MOST OF THEM. GIVEN TIME, THEY WOULD RETURN TO HIM--
GIVEN TIME, THE RIFTS WOULD HEAL -
GIVEN TIME--
BUT THERE IS NO TIME.

SHLUK!
SQUSH!
SQUSH!
SQUSH!

IT SEEMS TO TAKE FOREVER FOR NUBERUS TO DIE.
BUT IT ENDS.
IT ENDS.
IS EVERY-ONE ALL RIGHT?
ASIDE FROM FEELING LIKE SOMEONE PUNCHED ME IN THE JAW, I'M FINE. VAMPIRELLA?
I THINK SO. I--
--EUH.
I DON'T THINK WE'LL BE SEEING ETHAN SHROUD AGAIN..
WITH HIS BODY DESTROYED AND HIS SOUL DEVOURED BY NUBERUS? I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT.
AND WITH NUBERUS DEAD, THE POWER OF THE UNSEELIE CONGRESS IS SHATTERED.
WE'VE PAID A TERRIBLE PRICE. MY FATHER'S DEATH, VALERIE, CHELSEA--
--AND GOD KNOWS HOW MANY OTHERS--

BUT IT'S FINALLY OVER.
IS IT? FORGET FOR A MOMENT THAT THE WORLD'S STILL INFESTED WITH DARK CREATURES, AND IT'LL BE UP TO US TO GO AFTER THEM.
WHO LET ETHAN SHROUD COME TO POWER?
WHO LET THE DARKNESS IN IN THE FIRST PLACE?
IF NUBERUS OFFERED THE SAME BARGAINS AGAIN, WOULD THEY REJECT HIM?
I'M SORRY, ADAM, I DON'T THINK IT'S OVER.
I DON'T THINK THIS SORT OF THING EVER IS.
WE'VE WON FOR NOW THEN. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A LONG TIME, DARKNESS HAS BEEN BEATEN BACK--
FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A LONG TIME, IT'S MORNING IN AMERICA.

VAMPIRELLA RETURNS SUMMER '92

ON LITTLE BAT WINGS...

Dear Harris & Co.,

Awesome! Exciting! Sexy! Entertaining! All these words describe Vampirella. Before this new series, I had never heard of her, but I really like vampires, so I decided to give this series a try. Was I ever pleased!!

The way you integrated the past into the current story really helped new readers get up to speed and it wouldn't bore old readers, either. I'm really looking forward to #2, so keep up the good work.

P.S. Can I order the Vampirella trade paperback from you? Are you going to reprint the entire old series?

Joe Kotniewski III
1 Heather Lane
Oxford, CT 06478

Thanks for your support, Joe. No, we're not doing any back-product mail-order at the present time. Try asking your local comics store retailer to order more copies of Vampirella versus the Cult of Chaos *through his distributor. That should work—and it should also help convince your store owner that Vampi's audience really exists.*

As for reprinting the entire run of Vampi's old series, probably not. There are a lot (!) of stories in that run that don't do justice to our fabulous fangstress, and we'd prefer to show her at her best.

Regards!

What can I say? What a relief! What a story! What cover art! Thank you! I have to tell you, it was with much trepidation that I opened Book One. Vampi's been a hero of mine since childhood, and a wonderful role model she was. When I first heard she was coming back (a few months ago), I thought, "Wonderful, but what if they blow it?" Well, you guys *didn't* blow it—good job. I'm so impressed with the story—*excellent* writing, Mr. Busiek! I didn't see it coming and I usually do. I can't wait to find out what Vampi was doing there and how she was as she was. I was saddened, however, by the death of Van Helsing. *Please* don't kill off Pendragon. O.K., that's the good news. I do have a slight problem with the inside art. I'm a die-hard Gonzalez fan, I admit; so perhaps I'm too rough on your artist. I realize her needs to get a feel for her (no pun intended), and a few times did her well, but in my semi-humble opinion, Vampi is *always* beautiful, *even* when she's attacking. And *why* was she throwing up on page 36? I don't get it... Oh, well, I'm very impressed so far, and I enjoyed the reprint issue, too. Smart thing to do, and ties everything together nicely.

P.S. Just in case your wondering: I love Vampi...but not *that* way!

Becky Hamer
1434 Thomason Ave.
Tarrant, AL 35217

As you know by now, Becky, Conrads death didn't prevent him from being one of the surprises of Book Three. And rest easy, Pendragon is our writer's favorite character from this series, and he'll continue to make his presence felt in the issues to come (Pen will, that is—actually, so will Kurt).

As for your mention of José Gonzalez, we had been trying to work something out with him, but it doesn't seem that his return to Vampirella is possible at the present time. Stay tuned.

Send all letters to:
ON LITTLE BAT WINGS
c/o Harris Comics
1115 Broadway,
8th floor
New York, NY 11010

HARRIS COMICS UPDATE:

AS MENTIONED IN last issue, plans are already underway for a Vampirella one-shot Summer Special to appear this coming June (1992). In it, we already have a feature-length first meeting between Vampirella and Uncle Creepy and Cousin Eerie. They sit down and drink tea and eat watercress sandwiches, and—no, just fooling. This is not a purely social event. Creative talent for this piece of horror history is: Story by Steve Englehart, art by Jackson Guice. Kurt Busiek, the man with the unique talent for smooth narrative, scripts the other three features: one with Adam (with art by Dave Cockrum and Stan Shaw), one for Pendragon (with art by James Fry and Steve Leialoha), and one for...well, that's a surprise.

This will be a busy season here at Harris. In addition to the Vampirella Summer Special, we'll also be releasing:

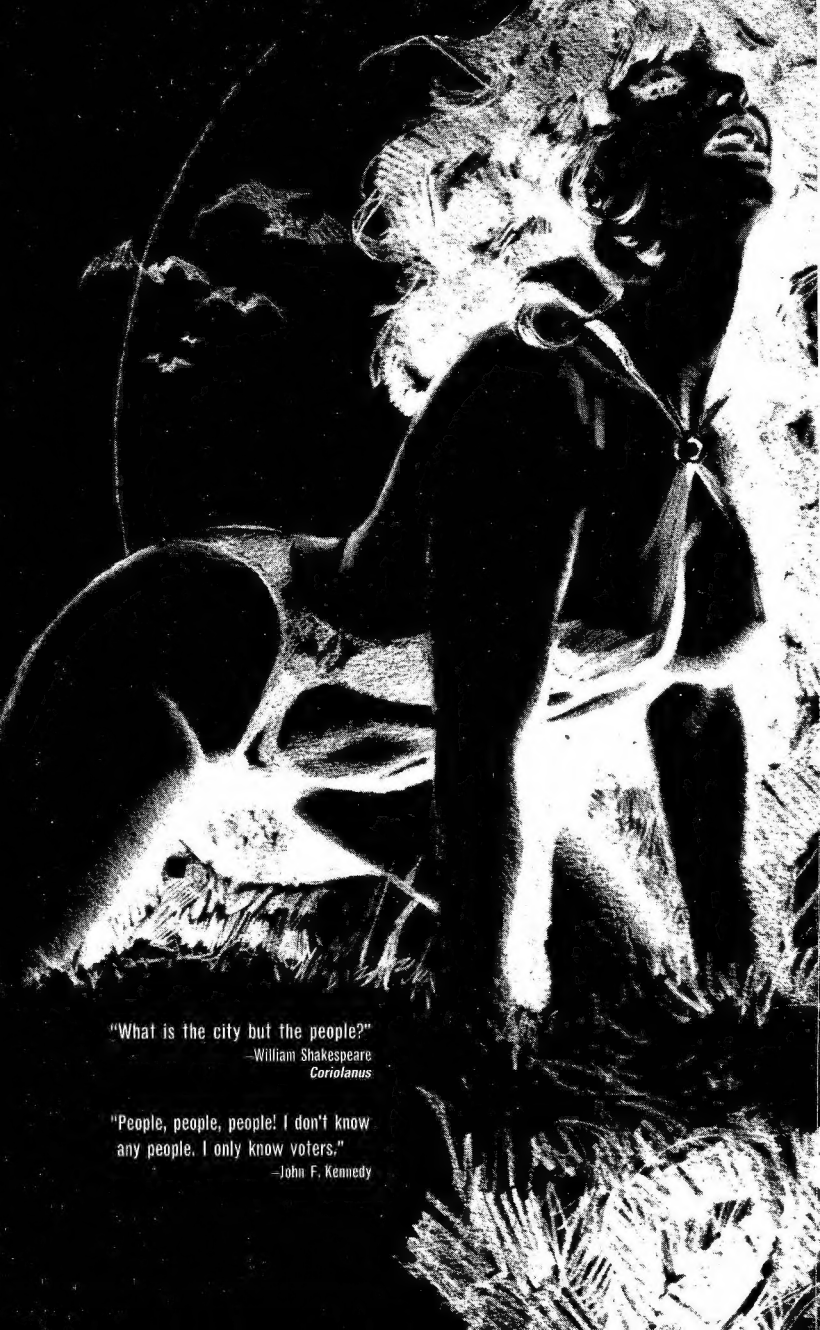
The CREEPY Limited Series, four new issues of mesmerizing terror. For the first time, Uncle Creepy and Cousin Eerie step out of their introductory panels and participate in their own adventure. They have plan, and the lives of eight people trapped in the Creepy House will never be the same afterwards. Issue #1, with a stunning new cover by Dan Brereton is on sale in March, and is 48 frightening pages of quality comics art by Peter David (writer), Kieron Dwyer (layout art), Tom Sutton (embellishing), with additional sequences by Gene Colan and Steve Leialoha and James Fry and Art Viscardi. Each bi-monthly issue of CREEPY is prestige format, and priced at $3.95.

VAMPIRELLA: TRANSCENDING TIME AND SPACE, our second collection of classic Vampirella tales from the early 1970s. Share quality time with Vampi as she visits the dream dimension, journeys back to the 19th century to meet a kinder, gentler Dracula, and to the Alps and the Bayous to battle the Darkling Disciples. Almost 140 pages of great comics work by T. Casey Brennan and Steve Englehart (writers), and José Gonzales (artist), with a new introduction by Englehart and a new painted cover of our favorite vampiress by Dave Stevens.

THE BEST OF EERIE trade paperback collection, a companion to last year's CREEPY: THE CLASSIC YEARS. This contains almost 140 pages of the best stories from EERIE's early years, with art by some of comics' all time-time greats, such as Angelo Torres, Gene Colan, Alex Toth, Jeff Jones, Neal Adams, Reed Crandall, Dan Adkins, John Severin, Al Williamson, and Gray Morrow. All that and a new cover painting by Dan Brereton, too.

Any and all of these can be purchased at your local comic book specialty store. Ask your retailer to be sure and order enough copies.

That wraps up the VAMPIRELLA Limited Series. Will Vampi return in her own, unlimited series? Things look encouraging. Look for an announcement in the Summer Special. Until then—keep shivering. In the Harris Horror Universe, there's always something frighting going on.



"What is the city but the people?"
—William Shakespeare
Coriolanus

"People, people, people! I don't know any people. I only know voters."
—John F. Kennedy

HARRIS COMICS

VAMPIRELLA #1-4

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PENCILLER
Louis La Chance

INKER
John Nyberg

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Trina Robbins

LETTERER
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CO-EDITOR & PUBLICATION DESIGN
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COVER ARTISTS
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José Gonzalez

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Richard Howell

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VAMPIRELLA CREATIVE TEAM